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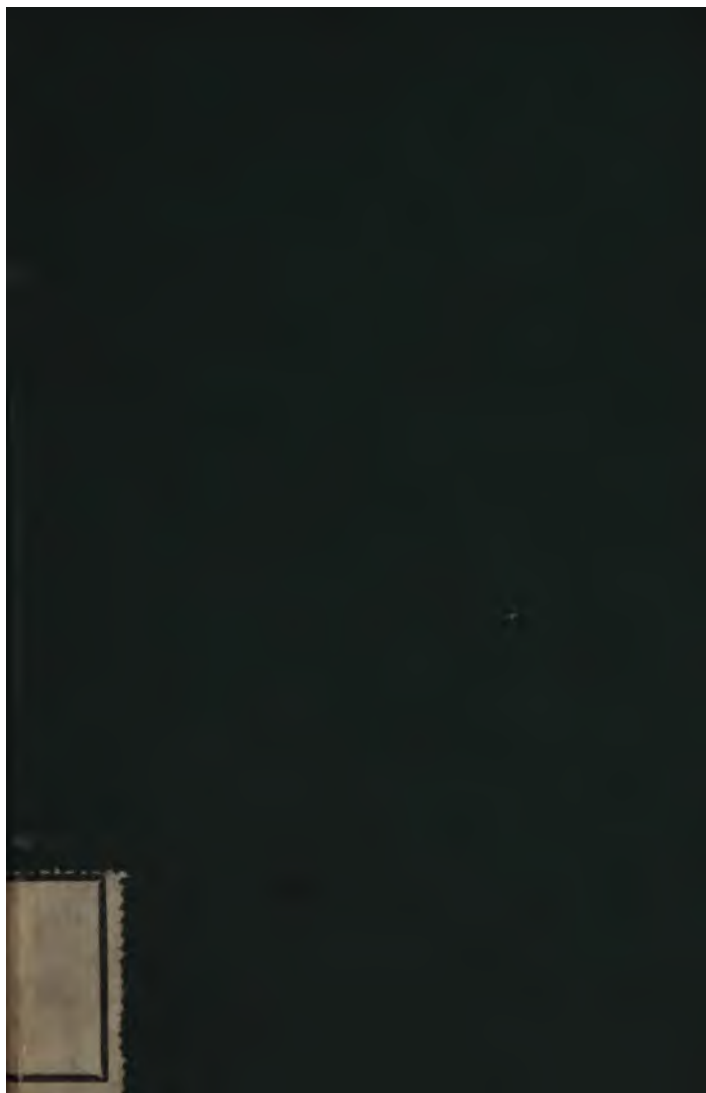
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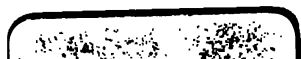
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THE

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Village Pastor.



BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE RETROSPECT, OCEAN, MORNING MEDITATIONS,
VILLAGE OBSERVER, VILLAGE CHURCH YARD, &c.

FORMERLY A LIEUTENANT IN THE ROYAL NAVY, AND NOW
A MINISTER IN THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

1

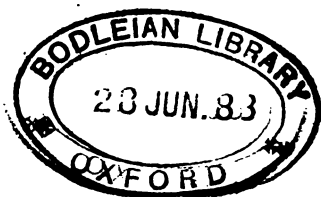


LONDON:

JAMES NISBET, BERNERS STREET.

M DCCC XXVII.

11125 L O



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Leather Lane, Holborn.

PREFACE.

THERE is something very pleasing in sitting down in the still and quiet of a winter evening, and conversing with our distant and beloved friends in an epistolary way, and of communicating intelligence and observations to them through the extensive medium of a religious periodical work ; of telling the tale of one person's sorrows and of another person's joys ; and more especially so, when there is reason to hope that the narratives and reflections may edify as well as amuse those who peruse them. Of this pleasure the writer has had a large share, for he has often intruded on the pages of "*The Christian Guardian*" with most of the following, and with several former communications. But whatever may have been, or whatever now may be, his individual gratifications, he would long ago have ceased to come before the public with these communications, had he not been, from time to time, urged to go on with them. Surrounded as he is by a large and scattered flock, he could find abundant employ without ever taking up his pen for the public. If, then, the following series of little tales and reflections are added to his former productions of a simi-

lar character, this must be his apology, namely, that he has been urged to produce them, and urged to it on the ground of its being his duty to do so. It has ever been his aim to select facts as the subject of his various communications. He has spoken of men and things as he found them ; and has expressed his opinions and feelings with all the independence of one who writes neither for emolument nor for popular applause. This much of explanation and apology he owes to himself; especially as he does not intend to enter into any controversies, or write in reply to objections made against his humble papers. To the rash and violent partizan, and to the narrow-minded and furious controversialist, he has not been, nor ever expects to be, acceptable. With one party he is too high in his sentiments, and with the other he is too low. It, however, has been his happiness to find, that a very large portion of good men, of all denominations of Christians in our land, have received his little publications with much kindness ; this, in return, naturally, on his part, begets and increases affectionate Christian feelings, which he wishes to cherish towards them, as being at once a duty and privilege. That all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, may love each other as brethren, and that the following papers may interest and profit, at least some few of them, as well as live out their little day to the glory of God, is the writer's earnest prayer.

THE
VILLAGE PASTOR.

No. I.

IT was, long ago, the cry of infidel men, "Where is the promise of his coming?" They dwelt in a world which was full of indications of Providence. The power, the majesty, and the glory of God, were displayed on every side, and every age proclaimed that neither men nor things continued in one stay. Yet these self-blinded and willingly ignorant men exclaimed, "All things remain as they were, even from the foundation of the world." Thus it is also with many of the present generation. The Lord works on their right hand and on their left, yet they perceive him not. He often displays the riches of his grace and the power of his Gospel in the life and conduct, it may be, of a next-door neighbour, and yet the work is altogether overlooked; or, what is still more criminal, it is despised and blasphemed by those at hand; and all this at the very time when strangers come from afar and see the dealings of the Lord, and give glory unto his name. Thus it was with regard to poor Molly B. Many of her neighbours dwelt year after year within sight

of her residence. They sometimes, indeed, heard her sufferings mentioned in a general and uninteresting way, and now and then they might catch a passing view of her person as they hurried by her cottage window; but neither what they heard nor what they saw made any impression on some of their minds. They perceived nothing of that hand of God which so wonderfully supported her. While distant friends inquired after her welfare, many of these neighbours, as they were called, passed and repassed quite unmindful of her sufferings and her joys. Nay, while angels encamped about her bed, and delighted to watch about her path, there were to be found no small number of men and women who looked on her with contempt, and spoke of her with much disrespect. Thus it hath fared with many who now shine forth as bright suns in the kingdom of their heavenly Father. Thus it fared with prophets and apostles, with confessors and martyrs of past ages, and thus it fared with the holy and the altogether lovely Saviour, when he honoured this sinful world with his divine presence. O then, my soul, ask not, look not for the friendship of this world. It must not, it cannot be obtained but on terms which would debase thy character as a follower of the Lamb, and darken all the evidences, and blast all the consolations of the Spirit within thee. Far be it from thee to court the frown and opposition of the world, but further be it from thee to ask or desire its smiles and approbation at the expense of conscience and of the favour of Heaven.

There is a dignity of character often found in the people of God, with which the gay, and vain, and ambitious part of mankind are totally unacquainted. This dignity is not conspicuous for its tendency to lead up to the honourable posts of the world. It revels not in the luxuries either of Church or State. It marches not forth in costly array either to the cathedral, the camp, or the council-chamber; nor is it necessarily connected with much learning or with the knowledge of many tongues. But it is conspicuous in a heavenly-mindedness of soul which looks down with Christian pity and holy contempt on all the vanities, the sensualities, and ambitious pursuits of a world lying in wickedness. It is conspicuous for sustaining all the afflictive dispensations of Providence with pious submission, and for often rejoicing amidst tribulation, and joying in God while passing through the very waters and fires of trial. With its conversation in heaven, it still remembers and compassionates the suffering, the ignorant, and the profane mass of mankind on earth; and it looks round and inquires where it can dry up the tear of sorrow, or instruct the uninformed, or warn and persuade the heedless sinner. It seeks the present and eternal good of all within its reach, and delights to live for others rather than for itself. Unawed by the vain and sinful customs of the world, it dares to be singular, and to pass by many things which are highly esteemed among men, because it hath learnt from Scripture that they are abominations in the sight of God. *This is dignity of character, as much when found in*

a poor cottager, as when adorning the person of a prince. And much of this dignity did my poor afflicted neighbour possess. She had passed through her days of childhood and youth as most others do, ignorant and unmindful of God and eternal concerns, and occupied and pleased with the perishing things of time and sense. What she might have been, had the Lord permitted her to grow up in health, and ease, and affluence, we know not; but not a few were witnesses of what he made her in the school of affliction, pain, and poverty. The beginning of those sanctified tribulations which marked and blessed much of her life, were of a very painful nature. A cancer formed itself in her mouth, and was burnt out, or rather supposed to be so, by the application of the most powerful caustics. Not long after the effects of this operation were a little surmounted, the dreadful malady appeared a second time, and was effectually removed by the knife. These, however, were but the beginning of Molly's trials in the flesh; for, soon after she had recovered this second operation, dropsical symptoms appeared, which, in defiance of the ablest medical assistance, continued exceedingly to increase; so that it became a great labour for her to climb the hill to church. A few months more passed away, and it was a painful exertion to get up and down stairs; and long before her death, the getting in and out of, and turning on her bed, were trials almost beyond the conception of those who did not witness them. For some years previous to her death her very figure was distressing; she mea-

sured more than three yards round ; and after the spirit had quitted its dreary clay, sixty-seven quarts of water were drawn off from the body. To attempt the description of all, or any great part of her trials and sufferings during more than twenty years of this affliction, would be vain. They were distressingly great. Hers was a case that made almost every visitor shudder, while contemplating what it is possible these bodies of ours may be called to endure. Yet, under these extraordinary and protracted, these frightful and incurable afflictions, Molly was always resigned, and generally quite cheerful. In the early part of her dropsy it pleased the Lord to send a Vicar here, whose ministry was greatly blessed to many, and to Molly among others. She also gained much and increasing scriptural knowledge and spiritual improvement from the kind and pious instructions of the Vicar's friend and patron, the then lord of the manor, and from his amiable lady, as well by attending on their little domestic services at the Abbey, as by their occasional conversations with her at her own cottage. These were all in active health and strength long after she was an afflicted object. She lived to hear that Minister's funeral knell, and to weep over the lifeless clay of that eminent and pious lady, and to behold other inmates take up their abode at the Abbey. All these things tried her faith ; but still she held on her way with her face Zion-ward, and often rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. For a considerable time after her complaint rendered her incapable of going

abroad to the means of grace, several poor pious women occasionally met at her cottage and held a prayer-meeting, which was a great refreshment to her soul. But one after another of this group departed hence to be no more seen, until these refreshing seasons were quite at an end. At the time of her death only one of this company remained, and she lived at too great a distance, and was too infirm to reach the village, except now and then in the summer season. All in succession entered into their rest; while poor Molly was left to journey on, as it were, alone, through the most trying portion of her earthly pilgrimage. Still she was cheerful, and enjoyed much of the presence of the Lord in her heaviest afflictions. Nor did this poor woman live merely for herself, or pass her days in vain. As a Christian and a member of society she lived for others also. With the aid of her widowed mother she took a poor motherless infant, whose parent died of the small-pox soon after it was born. This charge wholly devolved on Molly through the death of her mother; but she never repined, or repented having taken on herself such a burden. She kept a little day-school, and taught the cottagers' children to make lace and to read the Bible; and as the child in question turned out a cripple, he also was put to make lace until he grew a great lad, and was able to go to light work out of doors. Many a child did she live to teach both to labour and to read; and many of them continued to respect their dame to her dying day; for Molly would ever and anon *drop a kind word* of caution and encouragement,

and endeavour to lead their minds towards a better world. It was, indeed, for several years her great delight to speak of the goodness of the Lord, and to comfort others with words concerning the kingdom of God. The cottage which Molly inhabited, and wherein she passed through so many mercies and trials, was not lightly esteemed by her. *There*, for more than twenty years, she kept her little school, and received such kind friends and neighbours as called to see and converse with her. But, alas!

“Changes and trials are our lot
Long as we sojourn here.”

And these changes levelled her cottage to the ground, and entirely changed the face of that part of the parish. To quit this residence, although it was an uncomfortable one, was a trial to Molly. It stood at the foot of the church hill, and many on their way to and from the house of God passed by her door. These could now and then cheer her heart with a word in season as they stopped a few minutes by the way. She could also see from her window and door the rising fields, and admire the grain, and trees, and hedges, through the changes of the seasons; and as she was an observer and an admirer of nature, this was no small gratification. But when she was carried to her new and last earthly dwelling, she could neither behold the trees put forth or shed their leaves, nor observe the fields advance to harvest, nor see the people pass along at the call of the “church-going bell.” As far as personal accommodation went, *the change of residence was undoubtedly to her*

advantage; but elderly people are so attached to their old places of abode, that I could have wished to have seen her end her days where she had passed the most interesting part of her life. But this could not be; and she submitted with great resignation and patience, to the painful necessity of being carried to a new building, though it was the unavoidable cause of much suffering to her bulky and afflicted frame.

Molly was fond of reading, and would frequently read out to her neighbours while they sat at their lace-pillow by her bedside or easy chair; and as she had a good natural understanding, and a large share of experimental religion in her heart, and had passed through many trials and afflictions of body and mind; she could, and frequently did, give very suitable advice and edifying instructions to her tried and tempted neighbours. My acquaintance with her was confined to the last eighteen months of her life. It is possible, I believe, to find individuals in this parish whose cold hearts never warmed with gratitude to God at the conduct of Molly B.; and there may be others who, though they knew her personally, yet never knew her spiritual character. These may think too much is said about her; but there are many others who live near, as well as some who reside in distant parts of the kingdom, who will attest with me, that a visit to her cottage never failed to impress the mind with an exalted estimate of real Christianity in the soul. They will affirm with myself, that while her bodily afflictions made them shudder at the very idea of

what they saw it possible their own might one day be ; yet, at the same time, while they contemplated her resignation, her spirituality of mind, her faith and hope, they could not but exclaim, O that such a state were my own ! For my part I feel thankful that I was permitted to see and converse with her so long. During eighteen months I had an interest in her prayers ; and often through that period did she refresh and cheer my mind when it was disposed to droop under a variety of exercises. But she is gone from among us, and her now sinless and painless body rests beneath the green turf of our churchyard ; and the rich foliage of a wide-spreading sycamore-tree casts a deep and refreshing shadow over her grave. The day before her departure a few of her Christian friends met at her cottage to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with her. It was a refreshing season, and will not be forgotten by any of the party. Molly was in a state of great restlessness and pain, and quite unable to hold a regular conversation. When the ordinance was concluded, and I approached her bedside to bid her farewell, I took her by the hand and said, " Molly, you have for some days past earnestly desired to eat of this bread and drink of this cup, and now that desire has been granted : henceforth you will receive it no more until you partake of it new in your heavenly Father's kingdom—you will soon be there."—" I hope I shall," she replied. " Hope," said I ; " why, have you any doubt ?"—" No," she answered, with much firmness, " I have no doubt

at all." Here ended our conversation on earth ; for on the following day, Sunday, she departed this life early in the morning, and commenced a perfect and an eternal Sabbath in heaven.

The news of her departure was received with thanksgiving by all her friends. They knew how much and how long she had suffered in the flesh ; they had no doubt whatever of the meetness of her state for the kingdom of God, and hence they were assured that for her to depart, was far better. In these feelings I myself participated. But while I rejoiced for *her*, I had cause to mourn for *myself*. Under the many and various trials ever attendant on the ministerial office, it is no small consolation and support to the pastor of a flock to know, that the most devout of his fold offer up strong cries and prayers unto God for him. This was here my own case: Molly well knew how many trials I had to encounter ; she saw my spirits sometimes depressed, and my bodily strength sometimes fail me ; and well I knew that her fervent prayers were offered up for every needful grace and mercy in my behalf. So long as she dwelt at the foot of the church hill, and could sit up in her great chair, so long did she invariably watch my passing by ; and when but the nod of her head caught my eye, it cheered my heart, because, as I advanced up the hill towards the earthly courts of the Lord's house, I knew that her fervent effectual prayer was going up as incense before the throne of Heaven, that I might be enabled to glorify God, and benefit *mankind*, by rightly dividing the word of truth

in preaching among my people the unsearchable riches of Christ.

When, therefore, she was gone, I felt such a sense of my loss, as I rarely had experienced before. It never was my lot to have a friend who was a favourite of any earthly monarch; but here I had one who was beloved by the King of kings, one who was, as often as she pleased, admitted into the audience-chamber of heaven. Smile not, O vain world, at this my highly esteemed privilege; for I knew and felt it to be great, while it lasted, and the day that removed it from me could not but afflict the soul.

When this brief history meets the eyes of some distant friends, they will learn that ~~she~~, to whose necessities they oft-times kindly administered, is now removed beyond the reach of pain and want. Some of those never beheld her in the flesh, but she ceased not day or night to implore blessings on them; and the day will come, when they shall see and know her in the kingdom of God and the Lamb.

No. II.

THAT man who watches for souls as one that must give account, who really takes a lively interest in the present and future happiness of those around him, can never need the poor and empty diversions of the world to help out the day. His own proper occupations will ever fill his hands, employ his mind, and exercise all the feelings of his heart. He may be an admirer of nature, and alive to all the enchanting beauties of a captivating scenery. He may be awake to all the changes of the seasons, the productions of the field, the forest, and the garden ; and may give to each object and place its due attention and its due praise. He may be alive to the elegancies of refined literature, and sensible of the value and delighted with the discoveries of many branches of science ; yet he has higher and more interesting objects of contemplation than any or than all of these. The beauties of scenery, the changes of seasons, the foliage of woods, and the shades and tints of colours, will chiefly amuse or delight him as shadowing forth the infinite wisdom of their Creator. The elegancies of literature, and the researches and discoveries of science, will fascinate his mind no longer than while they can be brought forward *as illustrating the attributes, the ways, and works of Him who is altogether lovely, and*

wise, and good. Such a man as this will generally shun the world and court retirement, not through idleness, but because he loves seclusion for its quietude and its peace. His work is among his people; his parish is his home; his home is his best earthly paradise; and his successful labours are his earthly rest. The world will know but little of him, and it will love him less than it knows him. Many will condemn him as a gloomy enthusiast, as a man of weak judgment or of mischievous intentions; while others will consider it altogether unaccountable how his mind can be so occupied and his heart so engaged by the circumstances of his parish, as to disregard in a great degree all that engages the busy world, and employs the votaries of ambition, the accumulators of wealth, or the children of folly. It will often be hinted, that he has no connexions to associate with, that he has been crossed and soured in his mind; or that he has only turned his back on a world that had previously frowned on him. Those localities which bind his heart to the field of his labours; those past and present circumstances which consecrate and endear various spots and portions of that field from day to day to his soul; and those varying events which occupy his mind with hopes and fears, are unfelt by and unknown to men in general; and hence there are but few who do or can understand, how such a pastor can be more interested with his own parish than with all the world besides. They cannot conceive how pastoral duties should interest the mind more than the elegancies of

poetry, the beauties and changes of nature, or the discoveries of science. Permit me then, to explain this mystery, by stating what are the feelings and partialities, the sorrows and the joys, of some in the ministry. Is it asked, why the village pastor's attention is often drawn towards certain spots and places in his parish with a more than common interest, and especially when those places seem to exhibit nothing remarkable to the eye of the traveller? The answer is, there are local circumstances; there is an association of pleasing ideas, and a train of cheering contemplations connected with them, that are powerfully impressed on his heart and his memory. While the mere literary trifler

“ Watches the clouds as o'er the hills they pass,
Or writes a sonnet to a blade of grass,”

the faithful pastor casts his eyes to the right, where some half-concealed cottage is perceived through the trees that surround and overtop its roof. No sooner does his eye catch that object, than he feels thankful to God, that *there*, underneath that lowly thatch, he was once enabled to tear the veil of prejudice away, and to break in on those strong holds of self-righteous principles which had long held a part of the inmates in the shades of darkness and the trammels of Satan. While he glances at the building, he rejoices that now the heartfelt language of these individuals is, “What things were gain to us, those we count loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.” On *the left hand*, he may recognise here and there

the abodes of Christian pilgrims, whose once wounded and almost broken hearts have lately been soothed and bound up by that word of truth which a gracious God enabled him to bring forward in due season. Then, he may catch sight of some residence from whose humble chamber the well-informed and happy spirit has but lately fled, to awake up in the likeness of Christ, and to associate with the inhabitants of heaven. Or it may be, he is bending his way towards the door of the sick and dying man, whose soul is just on the wing for an eternal world, and only waits to pronounce the last blessing on the head of its spiritual guide and affectionate pastor. Such circumstances as these at once occupy and refresh the soul, and will invest the various spots and places with which they are connected, with an interest far beyond that which can be excited by all the diversified prospects of hill and dale, of waving wood and murmuring streams, of bleating flocks and lowing herds. The triflers of the day may smile and frown by turns on such a man; they may profess to pity his taste, and to marvel at his supposed stupidity; they may pronounce him unfit for company, and condemn him as a stranger to the enjoyments of life; but this only shows their ignorance of his real character and occupations. He has neither leisure nor inclination for the sports of the field, or the trifling amusements of polite and fashionable society. Should the path of duty or the call of Providence lead him a few miles from the immediate post of his labours, he will contemplate

every passing object as one who reveres his God and admires all his handy works; but however his taste may be gratified by the elegance or the beauty of the place where he sojourns, yet, like the parent of many children, his heart and his thoughts will run back into the bosom of his flock, and his prayers and best wishes will rest upon those to whom he has been made useful, whose future steps are to be guided by his counsel, whose dangers are to be pointed out by his experience, and whose drooping spirits are to be cheered by his prayers and encouragements. During some part of his travels, he may have slackened his pace to view the magnificence of this palace or of that mansion; he may have gazed with delight on the artificial and natural beauties of the lawn, the park, and the pleasure-grounds of the wealthy or the noble: yet, after all, the lowly porch which just overtops the door of one of his poor pious cottager's dwelling, will have more charms to interest his soul than the richest porticos of the most superb palace. Yes, strange as it may appear to the world, the wild honeysuckle and the untrimmed rose-bush which range across the windows and perfume the little gardens of some of his devout, poor parishioners, will possess charms for him vastly more fascinating than all the exotics of a distant country, and more gratifying to his mind than all the cedars of Lebanon which surround the habitations of strangers, or adorn the mansions of those who fear not God, and obey not his Son Jesus Christ. This local tie, this fond partial feeling, this ministerial

affection, shuts out, in a measure, the great universe of strangers from his heart, and sets up his own little world, his own beloved parish there. Perhaps this is not altogether right; but some men cannot help it: they do not love mankind in general less than their neighbours do, but they feel more tenderly for those at hand. Let the universal philanthropist frown ever so sternly yet there is a locality of feeling and affection in some bosoms which makes the sun cast a supposed brighter ray on the cottages of their own people than on the dwellings of strangers; which throws around those cottages a more lovely piece of scenery than adorns any other part of the world; at least it is so with the writer. Nor need the world be surprised at this. If the virtuous lover still remembers, and still through many a long year looks back on those times and places with an enthusiastic reverence, where he once found a heart to respond and a tongue to reply to his own; how much more will the shepherd of the Lord's flock recall to mind those seasons, or gaze upon those places where he discovered that his labours had been owned of the Lord to the turning of some from darkness to light, of delivering them from the bondage of Satan, and directing them to Him "whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light!"

To meet with men of great talents and extensive information, and to hear them discourse on the most interesting sciences, and explain some of the laws and operations of nature, may well engage the village pastor's attention for a sea-

son ; but to gather a little band of his children in the Gospel round him, and to hear them discourse piously and experimentally on the progress of religion in their souls, and to witness their consistent and edifying conduct, will interest all the feelings of his heart, will rejoice all the faculties of his soul, infinitely more than every other company and every other topic. Nor are these fond partialities, these Christian affections, exclusively the property of ministers. They are largely felt and deeply entered into by many pious, intelligent females, whose circumstances and inclination enable them to go in and out among the cottagers of various detached and rustic parishes in this kingdom. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that these partialities and affections will open many an avenue by which sorrow will pierce the heart ; they will call forth many a sigh which the ear of man hears not of, and many a tear which the crowded busy world never beholds. The faithful pastor is often called to feel a sorrow of heart, and experience a bitterness of spirit, which the great mass of the world never know. If, on one hand, he occasionally sees the distant residence of hopeful piety, or passes on towards a cottage, whose inmates will greet his entrance with tears of joy and half-articulated blessings ; he, on the other hand, must often look on the abodes of that wretchedness which is the fruit of sin. The house of the backslider, the habitations of blasphemy, drunkenness, or impurity, will but too frequently present themselves. He

cannot range through his little domain without passing the dwellings of those who fear not God nor regard man. Sometimes he may be compelled, in his forenoon's excursion, to notice more than one tenement which once he visited with great delight, but which now either shut their doors against him, or open them only to present such altered scenes as wring his very heart! Too well does the writer know all this by sad experience. Were the reader passing with him through the fields, or crossing the heaths, and hills, and vallies of his wide spreading fields of labour, he could point out many such objects, and tell what cheering and what afflicting circumstances transpired in each. He could point to one now present in his recollection, and say, Yonder, within the walls of that cottage, once dwelt the young, the blooming, the pious M. whose strength, like that of many others, was brought down even before mid-day; who fled, alas! but too soon from her affectionate Christian friends, and her infant first-born child, to associate with a better company, and to offer up better praises, than she or they could do on earth. *There, within that cottage, we saw the advance of consumption bring down her bodily strength with rapid strides, while at the same time we beheld her soul grow in grace and in meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. There it was, that with her we united our prayers and mingled our poor praises to him who hath said, 'Whoso offereth me praise glorifieth me.'* And *there* we once beheld some *tokens of godly sorrow for sin in her husband.*

such as led her and ourselves to indulge the fond hope that he also would consider his latter end, and become wise unto salvation. But, alas! scarcely had the amiable and happy wife departed in peace, ere the husband chased away every tear of natural sorrow, and silenced all his convictions of conscience, and forgot all his promises of amendment. Hence the cottage has lost all its interest to the pastor, as far as this pair were concerned; because the one who lived unto the Lord is departed hence to be no more seen, and the other is dead while he lives. From this object he might turn to another, where once lay the afflicted and apparently broken-hearted penitent T. —, whose subsequent conduct furnished another melancholy proof of the unsoundness of many of those fears and expressions of repentance to which the supposed or real approach of death often gives rise. His exertions in the hay-field heated his blood to an unusual degree; intolerable thirst urged him to the brook's side; he incautiously drank of the cooling but dangerous stream, and a most dreadful attack of inflammation ensued. Agonies of body and terrors of mind then united all their fury. He lay groaning and praying, as we considered, on the very brink of eternity, urging us to repeat our supplications to the Author of life and death in his behalf: and implore a few more years to be added to his days, that so he might give his mind, his health, and his soul to the Lord. His daily visits were then more than welcome to both him and his sister. *They seemed to catch his words from his lips*

with an eagerness not easily to be conceived, and their own tongues gave full utterance to the language of confession of sin. They lamented their former habitual neglect of the Lord's house, and their profanation of his holy sabbaths, and again and again they made the unasked-for promise of attending to the one thing needful; of seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, if so be the hand of mercy would turn aside the uplifted shaft of death, and once more restore health to their dwelling. Contrary to all expectation, the Lord did restore his health, and T. went *once* to church. Neither his sister nor himself appeared to have the smallest remembrance of their past tears, their prayers, their alarms, or their promises. Heaven had no charms to allure, and hell had no terrors to rouse, their minds. They dwelt in yonder nook of the wood, and the wind roared about their cottage in the winter's stormy season, and the thrush, the blackbird, and the joyous lark sung around their dwelling through the spring and summer months. The trees put forth, and again shed their leaves; and the fields and heath were clothed with and stripped again of their fruits and flowers: but none of these changes seemed to interest the minds of these people. They feared not judgment, because death was apparently turned aside from their door; and as to the loving-kindness and tender mercies of the Lord, these found no place in their meditations, their prayers, or desires. They lived and departed further from the Lord, until the sister became hardened in impurity and until T. was

seized with another similar attack, and after a few hours of excruciating agonies of body, and terrors of mind, he expired without sending for his pastor, and indeed before he had learnt of his being ill.

From scenes and views like these, the village pastor may turn, and point out, here and there, the residences of some who once belonged to his Sunday school, and whose conduct for a while gave him much satisfaction. A call at their cottage, he may add, was once greeted with a smile from these young disciples, and they were always ready and happy to repeat some passage of Scripture, or to sing some newly-learnt psalm or hymn, and never would they suffer him to depart without the request, "Do, Sir, come again soon." But this state of things is gone by. The world, the vain and sinful world, and tempters more evil and cruel still, have drawn off their minds and weaned their affections from God, from Christian instructors, and from Christian companions! They are no longer found at our school; they no longer invite their pastor to their cottage, but they shun him when abroad, and fly from him ere he enters their door. Instead of entertaining pleasing expectations, and hoping that their future days might be useful to others and honourable to themselves, he now thinks of them with many foreboding fears and gloomy expectations as to the present world and a future state.

Nor are these the only kind of trials to be encountered. The faithful pastor must expect to *meet with men whose deep-rooted prejudices*

quite blind their understanding, and steel their hearts against the truths of the Gospel. Nay; he may have, and that not unfrequently, to meet individuals of his own parish who frown at and really hate him for his very work's sake—men in whose opinion all earnestness about eternal things is enthusiasm, and with whom experimental religion is altogether scouted and stigmatized under the appellation of Methodism. And worse than all this, as coming closer home to his feelings, is to meet some individual who once ran well—who once walked humbly with his God, and affectionately and teachably towards his Minister, until some strange book or strange mortal fell in his way, and confused his mind and injured his heart. Too wise now to be taught, this man will look on his once respected and beloved pastor with feelings of pity and contempt—as a blind leader of the blind; and sigh over the certain and approaching calamity, as he supposes, of both leader and people falling into the ditch. In vain, reasoning, Scripture, and the sentiments of the wisest and the best of men who ever lived, are opposed to his errors. His heart is puffed up; his conscience has lost its former tenderness; and he runs in the way of his own delusions, perhaps to his own destruction and that of many others.

Such are a few of the painful objects that will present themselves to the eyes and heart of those who go in and out among the people of a country parish; such have but too often presented themselves to the eyes and heart of the writer; *and in proportion as the pastor's soul enters into*

the work of his sacred office, in a like proportion will these things bring forth many a sigh and many a tear which the world never hears, never beholds.

“He who desires the office of a pastor desires a good work ;” and it may be added, that he desires a very arduous, trying office. If he is made successful in winning some souls, he will be tried severely by others who refuse and rebel. His God whom he serves will not, however, leave him to sink under the conflict. When the cup of to-day is unusually bitter through manifold sorrows, that of to-morrow is generally rendered sweet. So, when the events of one day happen to be of that glowing and exhilarating nature as to endanger his steps, and to whisper something of self-applause or self-complacency, the circumstances of the next will, in mercy, be such as are calculated to lay him in the dust, from a sense of his own utter insufficiency to do any thing pleasing, acceptable, or useful, but as God works in him and by him both to will and to do by his own Spirit. Thus occupied with joys and sorrows, with hopes and fears, he goes forth among his people. Whatever may have been his former raptures as he gazed over a piece of natural scenery, or his delight as he read through the pages of classic authors, he now finds that this one object of watching over souls has, in a great measure, absorbed all others. He is, as was before hinted, gazed at both by unlettered men and by literary triflers as a strange being: the one has no conception of his mental *qualities*, and the other conceives that he is alto-

gether destitute of any. The boisterous sportsman, and the delicate, affected modern divine, will hold such a man in frightful abhorrence, and probably condemn him as mischievously intent on destroying the Establishment; or, if they are possessed of a little charity, they will consider him as melancholy or altogether mad. But he leaves these persons to their own pursuits, while his object is to go and preach the Gospel, rejoicing and sorrowing by turns, as he appears to gain or lose ground in contending with the enemy of God and man, in behalf of his own soul and of the souls of those committed to his charge. In his experience, the paradoxes of St. Paul are accomplished; he goes on through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report; oft-times considered as a deceiver, though his heart is simple and true; scorned and condemned as obscure and unknown, while in reality he is well-known to many of the excellent of the earth. He is chastened, but not killed; sorrowful, yet often rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; destitute indeed of worldly wealth, yet possessing all things through the grace of Christ Jesus, who hath loved him and given himself for him. While others are planning and striving to obtain the honours which come from man—while some are enjoying luxurious ease, or groaning under the burden of pampered indolence and privileged uselessness, and others are sighing after unhallowed fruits, he, far happier than they all, goes on with his humble labours, pursues his unnoticed round from cottage to cottage, and is better pleased with the news of a

soul being converted to God by means of honest labours, than he would be to hear of intended visit and patronage of any man earth. He envies none their honours or titles, for he does not want or wish them. His language is,

“ If so poor a worm as I
May to thy great glory live,
All mine actions sanctify,
All my thoughts and words receive.
Claim me for thy service, claim
All I have and all I am.”

No. III.

IT certainly is no small encouragement to Ministers and Christian labourers to observe, and bear continually in mind, how often the Lord is pleased to work by feeble, unpromising, and very unexpected means. Without for one moment undervaluing the great talents and gigantic acquirements of some men, or losing sight of the duty of Ministers and public instructors to read, to study, and to treasure up as large a store of knowledge and wisdom as possible, yet it cannot be too deeply impressed on our minds, that without God nothing is wise, nothing strong, nothing holy, nothing effectual to convert a sinner or to glorify the Saviour. Instruments may be rough or highly polished, they may be mean or noble, they may be learned or unlearned, yet they are but instruments. Each one requires the moving hand of God; and neither one nor another can effect any thing in the salvation of souls, except as accompanied by the divine blessing; and with that blessing, neither the roughness nor the rudeness of the instrument will prevent the production of good. Sometimes the casual visit of a cultivated pious individual is blessed to the instruction and conversion of a soul. At other times some poor man or woman, or young person, or even a child.

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is the instrument by which the Lord is pleased to work. Thus does the Spirit blow where it pleases. We behold its effects, but we can neither see its operation nor account for the direction it takes; only that so is the will of Him who is infinitely wise in council, and almighty in operation. The following little story may in some degree illustrate these remarks.

"Sir, I beg a thousand pardons," said a poor grief-worn woman one morning, as she entered my little dispensatory;* "but my poor girl is

- * When the writer lived at an insulated village, some six miles from medical assistance, he was urged by some kind and liberal-minded gentleman of the faculty at Cambridge, to procure a few medicines, and under their inspection and instruction to dispense them among his poor neighbours. The beginning of his practice was a day of small, but, blessed be God, not of unsuccessful things. Ten years have now elapsed, and every year has more and more convinced him of the great good that a clergyman may, through the divine blessing, do in this way; not only to the bodies but to the souls of his people. True, it is a work that will involve some expense, time, and anxiety; but it will not be without its gratifications to the pastor's mind. As to the poor people, who have but few friends to sympathize with them, and fewer who can or will relieve their bodily pains, it is no small comfort for them to have a person and a place to fly to, where on every occasion they may tell their little tale of bodily as well as mental trials. Every one at all acquainted with the general outline of diseases must be aware of the good effect produced by the *early* application of a few simple remedies; many a serious illness may be thus warded off, and numberless minor complaints speedily cured. Medical gentlemen of respectability are always ready to assist and direct, as occasion requires, the clergyman who thus endeavours to serve the poor and destitute, being well aware that in no other way

so very bad, and the parish doctor says it's of no use to give her any more stuff. But, Sir, if you could do any thing for her, poor dear child !”

“ Well, my good woman, dry up your tears, and tell me all about your daughter's illness.”

“ O Sir, she has got such a bad cough, and such a pain in the side ; and she gets no rest night nor day ; and, poor soul, she wastes away all to skin and bone, &c.”

“ And where do you live ?”

“ At —, in the parish house.”

“ And so your girl has been ill some time ?”

“ Yes Sir, it is about half a year ago she took a *deadly* bad cold, and ever since then she has got *worse* and *worse*. Poor dear soul, I sometimes don't know what to think about her. I'm afraid as how she'll never be well more.”

Having put as many questions as the case seemed to require, and feeling quite confident that the poor girl was too far gone to hope for a recovery, I considered it my duty to say to the mother what I thought.

“ My good woman, from the account you have given of your girl's case, I now tell you,

can the mischief occasioned by rashness, ignorance, and prejudice, be so effectually counteracted. Let no village pastor be deterred from making the attempt ; let him proceed cautiously, and often ask advice and information from medical friends ; but above all, depending on that divine blessing which is ever bestowed in answer to prayer. Were the writer to relate one tenth part of the providential interpositions he has experienced, the world would receive the account only as the tale of a deluded mind, or as the dream of one not quite awake from his slumbers.

that you must endeavour to prepare your mind for parting with her. She is, I doubt not, hastening to the grave. Medicine may, with the Lord's blessing, relieve her of much of her sufferings, and smooth down her way to her last hour. Her pain in the side may be somewhat relieved; her coughing may be assisted, and some hours' sleep may be procured as the nights come round; this most cheerfully I will endeavour to do for her so long as she remains here; but you must not encourage a hope of her recovery. I am sorry you live in the parish of —; I fear neither you nor your daughter are in a fit state to die. I regret the state of your place very much. Were I to go to see your daughter, it would give great offence; and, indeed, there are many more of my own flock around me than I can attend to."

The poor woman wept all the time I was mixing up her girl's medicines. It was now time to rouse her mind to the first and greatest object, the eternal welfare of her sick daughter. Having directed her how to give the mixtures, I put a Testament and one or two memoirs of pious dying young people into her hands, saying, "Go home, my good woman, and tell your daughter, as tenderly as you can, that I have not the smallest hope of her recovery. Tell her I am very desirous her soul may go to heaven; but that there are two things must be done before it can ever see God in peace. Tell her that her sins must all be forgiven by, or in other words, blotted out in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that her heart must be changed, or

born again by the Holy Ghost : these are the two things which must be done before she or any of us can be saved. Tell her she must pray continually for the Lord Jesus to pardon her. Tell her from me, that the Lord cares nothing for fine words ; he looks to and loves the stammering prayer of a poor, broken, contrite heart. If your daughter prays for the Holy Spirit to instruct her mind and renew her heart, she will be pardoned, instructed, and made fit for heaven. Go home and tell her this from me, and come here again as often as your medicines are expended."

"Heavens above bless your honour, and reward you as you deserve!" replied the poor weeping woman, as she put her hand to the door.

"No, no" said I ; "God forbid that I should be rewarded according to my deserts ; for then I should be sent to hell !"

"Mercy upon me, Sir, don't say so!" exclaimed she as she again let go the handle of the door, and looked with astonishment at me.

"Why, my good woman, what surprises you ? I say again, that were heaven, or rather the holy and just God, to reward me according to my deserts, I should be sent to hell."

"I hope not, Sir."

"You may hope as long as you please, but the thing would turn out quite contrary to your hopes. Mark my words: I was conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, and I am by nature a *child of wrath*, even as you and others are—I lived

a long time without God and without Christ in the world—I turned to and followed my own ways—I loved this world more than heaven, and cared far more about the body than the soul, and the creature had ten times more of my affections than ever the Creator had. This was my state for a long time; and if it is not quite so bad now as it formerly was, it is to the mercy of God, and not to me, that the thanks are due. But what am I now but a poor sinner? Every day, and in every duty, I fall short of giving unto the Lord that glory which is due unto his name. Had I done all that the Lord has commanded, yet I should be an unprofitable servant; but, alas! I often leave undone the things that I ought to do, and but too often do, and think, and say the things that I ought not. All my hopes of heaven are therefore in God's mercy through Christ. If the blood of Christ Jesus does not blot out my sins, and if his holy Spirit does not sanctify my heart, I am lost for ever. And the matter stands just the same with you, and exactly the same with your daughter. Now go home, and tell her what I say."

"Yes, your honour," sobbed out the poor woman; "and I hope she'll mind what I say."

"Yes, and I hope you will also mind what I have said."

"That I will," replied she, "and heavens bless you a hundred times!"

"Well, now one word more, and then you shall go. When you reach home, take the earliest opportunity of getting alone, and then fall on your knees and pray after this manner: O

Lord, have mercy on a poor ignorant wicked woman. Lord, I have been toiling and caring many years for my body, but I have quite neglected my soul. Lord, have mercy on my poor sick child. Blessed Jesus! blot out all her and all my sins. Lord, change both our hearts, and prepare us for death before death comes."

Thus our first conference ended, and the poor woman directed her way home full of grief, partly on account of her daughter's dangerous illness, and partly, I believe, on account of her own unfit state to die, as well as the unprepared state of her child. She was quite ignorant of the Gospel, but she endeavoured to follow my advice. Her habitation was a very uncomfortable one, there being two families mixed together in the house, and much noise continually around the sick girl. Yet we may rejoice in hope that the Lord eventually owned the imperfect means made use of, and amidst many unfavourable circumstances blessed them to the girl's salvation. On the woman's arrival at home, the daughter, with some anxious forebodings, asked, "Well, mother, what does the gentleman say?"

"My dear child, he says you must lose no time, but pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to have mercy on your poor soul; for he thinks you will never get well any more."

This was very abrupt, and Elizabeth burst into tears, and the mother soon mingled hers with those of her child. After a while the latter asked, "What makes you cry so?"

"O mother, it is the thought of leaving you, and my father, and sisters."

"Don't mind about leaving us, my child; but pray, as the gentleman says, to the Lord Jesus Christ to pardon all your sins, and to make you fit to go to heaven; and here is a Testament, and a nice little book which the gentleman has sent you to read, and he says it is about a young girl who died very happy when she was about your age. Don't mind about us; think about your poor dear soul."

In this way the subject of eternity was for the first time brought pointedly to the sick girl, and that by a parent who knew little or nothing of the matter, and who, until that day, had never seriously meditated on the thing either as it concerned her family or herself. As the poor woman visited me once every week for a fresh supply of such little things as were alleviations of her child's sufferings, I had many opportunities of repeating and of adding to my instructions to the mother, and of sending renewed messages to the daughter, as well as inquiring how the latter received them. The artless way in which the poor woman on these occasions told her tale at once satisfied me, that though she was very defective as a teacher, yet that she endeavoured to state to her daughter what I from time to time pressed on her own attention. As she had never associated with serious people, nor ever attended the preaching of the Gospel, she was an entire stranger to every thing of a religious phraseology, and therefore gave her tale in her own way; on that very account her words carried *more meaning* with them than the more correct

sentences of many a talkative but empty professor of the present day. It would seem, that in the very night which succeeded my first message, the Lord began to make the poor girl see and feel her sins. As she was weeping very much when the mother went to her the next morning, she again said, "Don't mind, my dear child, about leaving us."

"No, mother," said the girl, "I did cry yesterday at the thought of leaving you all; but I don't cry about that now; it is about my poor soul. O mother, I am a sinful girl, and not fit to die."

"Well, my child, remember what the gentleman said. You must keep on praying to the Lord Jesus Christ to have mercy upon you and to change your heart; and try and read in the Testament, and in the nice little book he sent you."

This advice was followed very steadily. Indeed, from every account I could gather, it was quite evident that the greater part of all her remaining days, and so much of her nights as were not passed in sleep, were devoted to reading and to prayer. To use the mother's words, "she was always praying to her blessed Lord and Saviour." She received considerable relief from acute sufferings by the use of the few things supplied her, yet she kept her mind steadily fixed on her approaching death; and I was often gratified to learn, through the mother, that she had neither expectation nor desire of recovery, but only longed and prayed for the pardon of her sins, that she might go to heaven.

and be with Jesus. Latterly, I requested a young person, who resided within half a mile of poor Elizabeth's dwelling, to go and endeavour to introduce herself, and to read to and converse with and assist her. This she did several times, to the great comfort, and I believe improvement, of both their minds. After Elizabeth was gone, I wished the visitor to give me some little account of her proceedings, and of the state of the poor girl's mind. M.— was considerably affected, and said, she would try and write a little of it down, if I would allow her; and a few days after the following humble epistle was put into my hands.

“ My dear Minister,

“ I will tell you a few words about poor Elizabeth ——. The Lord enabled me to go to talk to her about her soul. I went in and said, ‘ Well, Elizabeth, how are you to-day ?’

“ ‘ O M——, I am very ill.’

“ ‘ Well, I expect you cannot think of getting well again ?’

“ ‘ No, I do not wish to get well. I do not wish to live.’

“ ‘ Well, but have you found out what a sinner you are ?’

“ ‘ O yes ; I am such a sinner in the sight of God !’

“ ‘ Have you ever felt your sins ?’

“ ‘ Yes, for they are so many, as, I fear, the Lord will not blot them out.’

“ ‘ Do you pray to the Lord to blot them out ?
Do you pray to him to pardon your sins ?’

“ ‘O yes, I do pray ; but I cannot help grieving, because I think that my praying is all in vain ; for I think the Lord will not hear my prayer.’

“ I said, ‘ Elizabeth, trust in that merciful dear Saviour. He died to save poor sinners, and he will save you if you pray to him.’

“ ‘ Dear M——, there is one thing I want to tell you. When I am trying to pray, it seems as though somebody tried to stop me from praying, as though I must not or should not keep on.’

“ ‘ Well, Elizabeth,’ I said, ‘ you must pray against that, for that is Satan, and he will try to keep you from praying if he can ; but if you do pray on, the Lord will be on your side—he will strengthen you to keep on—he will never leave nor forsake you.’

“ ‘ O,’ she said, ‘ I hope I shall pray to him more ; I hope I shall love that dear Saviour more.’

“ I had got my hymn-book with me, and I read several of the hymns to her. ‘ M——,’ she said, ‘ they are such precious hymns ; will you leave that book with me while you come again ? for I hope you will come again.’

“ So this hymn-book she had several weeks ; and the next time I went, she said, ‘ O M——, I have found out that dear Saviour ; and he is so precious to my soul ! I have such a hope of going to heaven. Now I long to be gone to my blessed Saviour, for then I shall be with him for ever ; and I hope I shall meet all my dear friends there, and you also.’

“ *One time when I was going to leave her, she*

said, 'Come again: and if Mr. M. wants to know any thing about me, tell him I have such a desire to be the Lord's child—and I hope I shall be with him.' ”

This plain unvarnished tale increased my hope, that poor Elizabeth had been brought on her way to that Redeemer whose peculiar pleasure, when on earth, was to preach the Gospel to the poor; and who, now he is exalted at the right hand of Power, is daily gathering into his kingdom many from the most humble and abject ranks of life.

The concluding scene of this poor girl's life was of a piece with the general tenour of her conduct. From the beginning of her directing her thoughts to the concerns of her soul and of eternity, prayer was her general employment. She talked very feelingly and affectionately to her parents and younger sisters; and, as well as she knew how, she directed their souls to Christ Jesus. To the last, she had a deep conviction of her sins. It could not be said, that she had a rapturous *joy*, but she certainly had *peace* in believing; such a peace as entirely disarmed death of all his terrors, and made her welcome the hour of her departure, so that she often repeated the following verse to her mother;

“ My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this;
And sit and sing itself away
To everlasting bliss.”

The well-known hymn,

“ In vain our fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saint,
When he resigns his breath, &c.”

was peculiarly sweet to her, and often repeated to her family. Her last night on earth was a very tranquil and happy one. She fell into short slumbers, and then from time to time awoke, not to shed tears or to utter sorrows, or to tell of doubts or fears, but to repeat again and again that she longed to be gone; "for now I feel certain," she said, "that I shall see that blessed Saviour, and be with him. And then," added she, "mother, my little sleeps are such sweet and happy sleeps as I never had before." This was her state of mind until the Lord graciously dismissed her spirit without one pain, or fear, or struggle.

Thus we may learn how easily the Lord can accomplish his own work, by the feeblest instruments and amidst very many apparent difficulties; and thus the pastor and the kind Christian friend of every description may gather encouragement to drop a word of exhortation and warning as opportunities offer. As to the poor old mother, who from time to time carried little books or messages to her child, and endeavoured to urge her on in seeking the Lord, she soon saw her child outstrip her in the race for heaven, and gain upon her in the knowledge of the Gospel, and of the Scriptures, Psalms, and Hymns which she read. Poor Elizabeth was but fifteen years old when she died; and only a part of one of these years had been employed in the pursuit of that knowledge which makes wise unto salvation through faith that is in Jesus Christ. Yet it cannot be denied but that, previous to her departure,

she knew more of divine things than any, than all the other members of her family.

Some considerable time has now elapsed since this poor girl's departure. For several months entertained hopes of the old woman and some others of the family ; but these hopes have long since vanished. They are not quite so ignorant as they once were, but all that distressing and incredible apathy so common among the aged village poor has, I believe, regained its full ascendancy over the mother ; while the younger branches of the family have long since refused my counsel and scorned my reproof. Thus cheering and disheartening events make up the life of man in his way to heaven, and more especially follow each other in the work and experience of a village pastor. Oh that both shepherd and flock, in every parish, may carry about them a solemn sense and recollection of the account they will each be soon called upon to render up, when time, and means of grace, and seasons for speaking and for hearing, will end for ever.

No. IV.

HAPPINESS, such as this earth can produce, is graciously dispensed to some individuals, or, if you please, attained by a certain number of persons in every stage and gradation of society. It is, indeed, but seldom found where a misjudging world is so prone to look for it, I mean in the ranks of nobility and splendour; yet there are a few noble mansions beneath whose roof it sometimes tarries for a season, and makes glad the heart of man. In our search after happiness, we shall, however, more generally find it tenanted by the abodes of those whose state and condition in life is equally removed from the paralyzing influence of want and poverty, and from the intoxicating charms of power and riches. In a state of great affluence and worldly honours, it is very difficult for a soul to walk humbly with its God; and amidst all the trials of cold and hunger, of pain and wretchedness, which abject poverty often brings to the sufferer's dwelling, it is no easy duty to exercise resignation and contentment. Yet that grace which is all-sufficient is occasionally found in its full exercise; on one hand guiding the individual through abundance, and on the other conducting him through want and poverty; sanctifying both poverty and riches; making all things work together for good to the present and future happiness of the

benevolent
mighty formed
constituted the nature and
animate and inanimate portions
as to pronounce the whole "very
the original construction and constitution
world and its creatures, there was no
complaint, because there was no
want, or even inconveniency, to be
with. That enviable state of things is
passed away, and now man is born to
trouble; he journeys through the
weary traveller, and brings his years
as it were a tale that is told. But
seasons of refreshment? no circum-
cheering nature to light up the gloom
grimace here on earth? Yes, the
blessings to be attained; and
class of society do actually partake
them. No small part of the felicity
the spirits of just men
the manifestation of the

feeling of every renewed mind. And should the Christian philanthropist discover, as sometimes he may, a portion of this happiness where he least expected to find it, it will produce a sensation of soul, faint indeed, but somewhat resembling that which angels feel when a sinner repents, confesses, and forsakes his iniquities.

A certain portion of cheerfulness of spirits, and a tolerable share of Gospel faith and Gospel practice, are the grand requisites to the enjoyment of happiness beneath the sun. Wherever you separate these, there you injure the individual. Wherever they exist, there you find a truly enviable character. It is quite possible for a soul to be in possession of the last of these excellencies, and consequently to be in a state of safety, while destitute of the first: this, as far as the eternal destiny is concerned, leaves all well; but so long as a man is the subject of constitutional or accidental depression of spirits, he is for the time being incapable of happiness. The gloomy cloud that overshadows him will eclipse those cheering rays which otherwise would beam on his soul, and give life and animation to all his thoughts and actions. Again, it is not enough that the understanding be well informed, that the mind assents to all the leading doctrines of the Gospel; there must be some good portion of a corresponding practice, or that peace of God which passeth all understanding will not keep the heart and mind through Jesus Christ. So long as a professor of the Gospel walks carelessly, so long as his tempers are unsanctified, and his passions and appetites not brought into

subjection, his soul will be far from peace. The honest and good heart, which receives the seed and brings forth fruit, some thirty and some sixty fold, is a state of mind which *believes*, and *loves*, and *obeys*, according to its light and strength, and means and opportunities. This is a safe state ; but it may be coupled to a constitutional depression of spirits, and be therefore in great measure a stranger to happiness. Should it, however, bless any individual who at the same time is favoured with a portion of natural cheerfulness of spirits, that individual cannot but be happy. It will neither be in the power of adversity or prosperity to throw many dark clouds over such a soul. Its pathway will occasionally be strewn with thorns, but a constitutional cheerfulness of spirits will always prompt it to look at the fairest side, and enable it to extract much of the venom from every little wound which the thorn or the brier may inflict. And when some great and almost overwhelming calamity occurs, the world will see that a Gospel faith, working by love and purifying the heart, can lift the mourner's head above all the swellings of the torrent, and sooner or later enable him to go on his way rejoicing.

In one of those vallies, or dells, which run through and beautify our parish, stands a cottage in a kind of natural excavation. A little garden stretches on in one part of the front and round one end, and bushes and cherry-trees fill up the excavation at the other extreme ; while it is overtopped on the back part by the neighbouring *bank*. At a distance of not more than five hun-

dred yards in front rises the opposite heath, over which the topmost boughs of a beech wood are just visible above the wild thyme and ant-hills which shut out from the cottager's view all the kingdoms and nations of the earth, and all their glories and deceptions, their enchantments and their honours. The building is low, and in poor repair; but its situation is so strikingly romantic, that it cannot fail to attract the notice of every stranger as he passes down from the high land on either side of the valley. The stormy wind that blows furiously in mid-winter along the elevated heath, and roars through the beech woods that adorn the surrounding country, can reach this dell cottage with but a faint murmur. Its lowly structure, and its secluded situation, ensure its safety in seasons of elemental danger, while more lofty and magnificent buildings are shaken to their very foundations. And as it is with the cottage, so it is with a part of its inmates. Those political and polemic storms which sweep over many provinces, and create and convey wretchedness and ruin to multitudes, reach not the tenants of B——er Dell. They never heard of those demagogue, infidel reformers who would rend to pieces the good old fabric of our Constitution, nor of those innovating prelates who would efface all the peculiar features of our venerable Church, and chase away the sentiments and very remembrance of our great Reformers from the land. The plans and pursuits of ambition, which lead many to shame and confusion, never tormented them. They are strangers to the entanglement of riches, and to the

awful snares of power. They know nothing of that refined system of affectation and deceit which so often prevails in what is called genteel life. They lie down at night to sound and safe repose, neither fearing nor intending evil. They rise in the morning at peace with their neighbours, at peace with each other; and some of them, I trust, at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The family consists of an old man and woman, their son and his wife, and four grandchildren. Of the old woman, little can be said; she is an eccentric character, but an affectionate wife, and kind to her children and grandchildren. The old man is, I trust, really in earnest about his soul. He is of a cheerful disposition, and rises between three and four o'clock in the morning to his labours, and seldom reaches home before sun-set; yet he told me, not long ago, that he has no rheumatism, and can go about almost as "*lightsome*" as ever. The son is an industrious, quiet fellow, inclined to seek the Lord, and very happy when surrounded by his parents, his children, and his wife. His partner is an interesting woman, humble, modest, pious, and sensible. She is of a delicate constitution, and often afflicted with sickness. The two eldest girls are under thirteen and twelve years of age; one of them is in my Sunday school, and the other in that which was established in the parish at a time when the school connected with the church unhappily fell to the ground.

I scarcely know whether this should be called, "*the peaceful*," or, "*the happy*," or, "*the con-*

tented," or, "the affectionate family." Notwithstanding all the trials which arise in their dwelling, they are affectionately united to each other; and if complete happiness cannot be said to crown their days, they certainly do enjoy peace, and feel no small share of contentment. I will tell a little tale or two relating to them, and then leave the reader to give what name he pleases to the cottagers in B——er Dell.

At rather an unusual hour, a few weeks ago, the old man, dressed in his clean white smock frock and oiled shoes, knocked at my door, and having gained admittance, thus addressed me; "Sir, I hope you will excuse my making so bold to-night; but I wish to leave sixpence for the poor heathen people." While he was getting the little sixpenny piece from the bottom of his pocket, he proceeded; "Only think, Sir, how the Lord favours us above all these poor souls in the dark parts of the world. Mercy on me, what a thing it is to think about! What sad things they do, and how they torment one another and themselves too!"—"Yes, father; and once the people who lived in England were as ignorant of God, and as cruel to themselves and to each other, as what the poor heathens now are, to whom we are sending the Gospel. England was once as dark as Africa now is. Our forefathers lived without God and without Christ in the world." The old man paused awhile, put down his sixpence on the table, and then said, with much apparent feeling, "Mercy on me, Sir, I have been a poor blind, dark creature myself, for many a long year. Well, if I

had been cut off some time ago, what would have become of me? I'm sure, Sir, I ought to do all the little I can to send the light to these poor souls in foreign countries. The Lord make me more what I should be; for, Sir, I'm now sure it is as you tell us at church, no one but the Lord himself can make us new creatures."

After chatting a little more on the subject of the heathen world, and missionary concerns, I asked the old man how he and all the family went on at home, "Why, to be sure, Sir, my old woman is a little *crossish* at times, but, thank God, we are pretty comfortable. Never had any poor man a better son than I have got; and there's that dear woman his wife, she is as good a creature as ever lived, there never was a pair more happy than they. It does my heart good to see it. And then there's that girl, Sir, that comes to your school; O that is a dear good child. You can't think, Sir, what a girl she is for her book, and how nicely she talks and reads to me in the evening when she comes home from the lace-making school! Why, Sir, she wouldn't neglect getting her lessons and hymns for ever so much. I think she would do any thing rather than grieve you. She is a brave girl to be sure. The other is a good girl too, but she is very still, and does not say much."

"Well, father, I am glad to hear that you are all so comfortable in the old cottage. I hope the children will continue to go on well. As to your daughter-in-law, I have always considered *her* a very worthy character. It is a great

mercy, and must be a great comfort for you all, to live together in peace and love."

"Ah, Sir, that it is," said he, as he stretched his hand out and rested it half way on the table towards me, and proceeded: "Now, Sir, I'll tell you what. You know that poor men have but short fare at times, and now and then my son is out of work for days and days together; and his wife, you know, Sir, is very often a poor sickly body, and can hardly do for the children and him: so that at times, poor fellow, he goes out to work in the morning with only a small piece of bread. But then he won't take any more, for fear the children and their mother should go short. Now, Sir, when he comes home at night his wife will say, 'Well, my dear, how are you? I'm afraid you are very hungry.' 'O no,' he will say, 'I'm pretty well; how be you, my child?' Because you know, Sir, she is a sickly body; and then when she is able to say that she is pretty well, why, Sir, that does him more good than a meal of roast meat would do. I'm sure there never was man and wife happier together in the world! Then she talks so nicely to us old folks. I'm sure some nights I lie awake for hours thinking about what you tell us at church. I wish I could get my old woman to mind these things a little more."

"Well, father, you must pray for her, and be kind to her. You must set her a good example; and who can tell but the Lord may call her into his vineyard at the eleventh hour? His forbearing mercy has spared you both for many a long year, when neither she nor you had any concern

whatever about your souls—when you neither knew the way of salvation nor desired to learn it. I pray that the fear and love of Christ may possess every heart under your roof.”

As my presence was required elsewhere, I was now obliged to dismiss the old man with my congratulations that he was about to return to the bosom of at least a contented and affectionate family. His honest and undisguised tale afforded me much satisfaction, coming as it did on the back of a circumstance or two, which only a few days before had considerably interested my mind, and raised my opinion of his daughter-in-law, and which I shall now just notice.

It was on a Saturday, when I rode down towards B——er Dell, without any express object in view beyond that of enjoying the refreshment of a lovely forenoon and a salubrious air; but recollecting that my school-girl had been absent from her place both in the morning and afternoon of the last Sunday, I turned my pony's head towards her cottage, little doubting but that something more than usual had detained her at home. As I approached the cottage, I perceived the surrounding bushes here and there spread over with the usual articles of a poor man's linen-chest. And on entering the door, I found the children's mother at her washing-tub, and my school-girl sitting in the chimney-corner, looking less ruddy than usual, and wrapped about and buttoned up to the chin in the grandfather's old great-coat. On my entering the cottage she blushed exceedingly, as she rose and made a *hasty curtsy*, and again seated herself. After

inquiring into the health of the invalid mother; and how she managed to do the washing of the family, I turned to my school-girl, whose strange appearance, so unusual and so uncouth, at once surprised me, and, in defiance of all my efforts to preserve a grave countenance, made me more than smile at what I saw. "My child, what are you doing with that coat wrapped about you? really I hardly knew you." She again blushed a deep crimson, hung down her head, and remained silent. "Now do tell me why you are thus buttoned up to the chin in that old great-coat!" As the child still remained silent, the mother laid down the article she had been washing, and resting her left hand on the edge of her washing-tub, while with her right she wiped off a tear which would start from either eye, she said,

"Well, Sir, if I then must tell you, I must. But, Sir, I don't intend to complain; indeed I don't murmur. I know I have many mercies for which I ought to be thankful; but, Sir, my husband has been lately a good deal out of work, and as our weekly income is at best but scant, I cannot get what I otherwise would have for the children to put on; and as I do not like to see them untidy on the Sabbath-day, I am obliged to make them strip off their frocks and a part of their things on Saturday, that they may be washed and fit to go to school in on the morrow, Sir, I do not murmur or complain; but this being the case, you now know the reason why — is wrapped up in her grandfather's great-coat. I fear it was in this way she took a cold last Satur-

day, for on Sunday she was too unwell to go to school, but I hope to-morrow she will be there again."

This touching, unaffected tale, this unexpected explanation of the mother's, made me feel keenly both for her and for my school-girl. Nay, for some time it took away my utterance, and was well nigh making me betray my feelings as the mother had done hers. Up to that hour I had no idea of the real state of their domestic difficulties. The mother and her children had always appeared so clean and neat on Sundays, and whenever I met them in the village, that I had no conception of that real state of poverty with which they were silently and resignedly struggling, until this day's visit brought a part of it to light. I felt condemned for the lightness of my conduct, and was grieved that I had urged my inquiries so far. I feared that I had hurt the modest, delicate feelings of this amiable cottager, and for a while I almost wished I had passed the door without looking in. And still I should experience these feelings, did I not hope that the discovery of her real situation may, in the dispensations of Providence, lead to some little relief for them. As the child still appeared to feel much embarrassment, I first addressed her, bidding her not think her lot hard, since thousands of children were much worse off than herself. "As to the appearance of the old coat," said I, "though it looks a little odd, yet, under the circumstances in which you now wear it, it is all very well. The blessed Saviour himself, when on earth, appeared as a servant; and St. John the Baptist had only

the skin of a camel thrown over his shoulders, and buckled round him with a leathern strap or girdle. You may be certain, my child, that the Lord Jesus Christ is as ready to hear, and as willing to bless your soul when you pray to him in such a garment as this, as he would be were you clothed in purple and fine linen. Nay, if you do but continue to seek him, to love him, and to commit your soul into his hands, he will certainly one day clothe you with a robe of glory—with such a garment as no eye on earth ever beheld; and which none can wear but angels and happy spirits in heaven. As for myself, so long as you continue a good girl, I shall love you as much when clad in the old great-coat as in any other dress. The Lord himself looks not at the outward appearance, but at the heart; and his ministers are more desirous that their people should live well, than that they should dress well."

While I thus talked to the child, the mother resumed her labours, and dropped many a tear on the clothes she was washing. They were not tears of vexation, nor of distrust, nor of earthly sorrow, but the salvation of her child lay near her heart, and the subject I had touched on was one which always beguiles her of many tears whenever it is brought forward. Nor is this a singular case. The loving-kindness of a covenant God, the tender mercy of Christ Jesus to guilty sinners, and the joys and felicity which are reserved for those that love him, are found to reach many a heart, and to call forth many a tear of mingled gracious feelings, as well on the mountain's brow as in B——er Dell. To the

weeping, yet rejoicing mother, I said but little at that time, beyond reminding her, "that our present little difficulties and trials were not worthy to be compared with the glory which one day, we humbly hoped, would be revealed to us and in us; that these light afflictions, which were but for a moment, were capable, through grace, of working out for the soul a far more exceeding, nay, an eternal weight of glory." Thus we parted for that time; and it was not long after that the old man called with his sixpence for the missionary box, and told the tale of the contentment and happiness of his little household, of the affection of his son and daughter for each other, and of the dawning piety of my school-girl.

"O blest retirement ! friend to life's decline,
Still cheer this household with thy peace divine :
For blest are they who crown, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease ;
Who quit a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learn to fly.
On may ye move to meet your latter end,
Redeem'd and pardon'd by the sinner's Friend ;
Sink to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way :
May all your prospects brighten at the last,
Till heaven commences ere this world is past."

No. V.

THERE are few themes more suited to, or more necessary to be urged home on the attention of our people, than that of the imperfect nature of all earthly happiness, and the transient and uncertain tenure on which every present enjoyment is held. It is in heaven, and in heaven only, that pure and permanent felicity can be obtained. "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest," is the mandate of Him who created men, and worlds, and angels; and the reason assigned by the Majesty of heaven is, "this world is polluted." Sin hath contaminated all its life-springs; and pain, and sickness, and death have followed, and now hover over the palace and the cottage, and embitter more or less every earthly enjoyment; and in many, very many instances, leave us nothing to contemplate but the miserable wreck and ruin of what originally was intended to be perfect happiness, and unimpaired and unpolluted good. Henceforth, then, let us hear and gladly obey the divine injunction. Let us aspire after those joys which are at God's right hand. From time to time let us contemplate this earth as the theatre of death, and sin, and evil, and then let us ask,

“ Could we stay where death was hovering,
 Could we rest on such a shore?
No, the awful truth discovering,
 We could linger there no more.
 We forsake it,
Leaving all we lov'd before.”

Do the votaries of pleasure ask, what we expect to gain by so doing? Do they inquire where our world lies, or who hath seen or tasted of those felicities which engage our attention, which animate our hopes, and urge our steps forward? Our reply is, that we are in expectation of finding durable riches, and in the pursuit, we walk by faith and not by sight.

“ Though the shore we hope to land on,
 Only by report is known;
Yet we freely all abandon,
 Led by that report alone;
 And to Jesus,
Through the trackless deep move on.”

That bountiful Giver of every good and perfect gift, who in the dispensations of his providence appoints some to give and others to receive of the fruits of the earth, directed my steps to the cottage in B——er Dell, and afterwards led me to state what then presented itself to my notice, and what passed in our short conversation. That statement no sooner went abroad, than it procured from a few kind friends sufficient to render the situation of the inhabitants far more comfortable than it had been before. The wind and rain no longer drove through the shattered windows, nor did the grass sods any longer serve to fill up the holes in the clay

floor. The cottage assumed both a comfortable attitude and a neat appearance, and the garden became gay with flowers; the meat-rack exhibited part of a side of bacon; while the necessity for the old great coat was done away, because there were articles both to wash and to wear at the same time. All seemed comfortable; and parents and children were, I trust, sensible of their mercies and thankful to their benefactors. But too much present enjoyment is not good for man. His hand is too frail to carry the cup of earthly happiness steady if it be filled near the brim; nor can he long bear its sweets without some admixture of bitter ingredients. This the heavenly Physician well knows, and in great mercy deals with us accordingly. Thus he hath dealt with the inhabitants of the cottage in the dell. While the hand of charity was supplying the wants of their bodies, and the labours of benevolence were transforming the dwelling into a comfortable residence—just as the finishing act of kindness was removing every real want from the door, even then, Death entered and smote my school girl, and, after four days of severe suffering, numbered her among his slain! Delirium and excruciating pain rendered her incapable of saying much; and her early exit left not sufficient time for the development of character, or the ripening of Christian principles. She was not perfect; but I believe she lived not in vain, either as it concerned herself or others. I missed her on the preceding Sunday, her place being unoccupied at the school; but

being ignorant of the cause, on Monday I left home to attend a missionary meeting; and did not return until the Thursday morning. Then it was I first heard of her illness and danger, and turning my horse, proceeded to the dell, and arrived just in time to close her eyes, but not to converse with her. During her few short intervals from delirium and agonizing sufferings she prayed much, and repeated portions of hymns and passages of Scripture, and often inquired for me. These inquiries were in vain; we were not henceforth to meet for prayer or conversation. May we hereafter meet to praise and adore the Lamb of God in heaven!

To have heard of the aged grandfather or grandmother's being sick, would have excited no great surprise. It would have appeared nothing out of the common order of things, had death been found stretching their aged and withered limbs on the bier. But, I confess, I was not prepared to hear of the sickness, and to witness the departure, of this child. It was an unlooked-for event, and made me deeply feel, that "in the midst of life we are in death."

B——er Dell cottage is now the house of mourning; but this is far better than that it should be the house of worldly, sinful mirth. These sorrows, I trust, will be sanctified; and in the event of such a happy termination, both relations and minister will have cause to bless the hand that inflicted a wound on the survivor's hearts with the gracious intention of benefiting their souls. O, indeed, it is of small consequence whether our path be smooth or thorny,

if it does but conduct us to the haven of eternal rest; for, whatever, in the day of health, may be our estimate of the possessions of this world; however highly we may rate its distinctions and its honours, its connexions and enjoyments, the time is coming when they will be light as the dust on the balance. In the morning of life and in the noontide of manhood, we may be intoxicated with their delusions; but there is an hour coming—an hour of speedy sickness and death, or a somewhat more distant season of age and lingering departure—when *vanity, vanity of vanities*, will be written on them all.

In the hour of calm retirement, of secluded retreat from the surrounding hurry and thoughtlessness of mankind, what a scene of confusion, and folly, and madness, does not the world appear! Men possessing an immortality of nature, and placed here only for a few short days prior to their removal into an endless and an unchangeable world, are seen to do, and speak, and think only as though there was no God, no future state, no blessedness or misery beyond the grave! Mankind, with but few exceptions, are still wedded to the earth, lost to every consideration of heaven, and plunged into the depths of visionary speculation, vain hopes, and selfish, ambitious disputes. Life, in the hands of most of its possessors, is but a dream, from the follies and delusions of which the individuals awake when too late to act as rational beings. This is an unpleasant theme to the votaries of pleasure and to the advocates

of vice. The ambitious and the haughty frown on the report, and the grovelling avaricious earthworm sneers at the admonition which bids him set his affections on things above and not on things on earth. Meanwhile, the young, the gay, and dissipated of either sex, laugh it to scorn, and quicken their steps along the path of life, nothing doubting but they shall find abundance of pleasures strewed in their way for many years to come. The awful mistakes of thousands who already have perished in their own deceivings, serve not to warn or alarm their surviving companions. They believe not Moses or the Prophets; they regard not the most awful displays of divine Providence; they lay not to heart the most solemn and distressing, but salutary admonition of dying, despairing companions; nor would they be persuaded, though one were to rise from the dead.

My departed school girl had of late written some sentences, and part of a hymn, in the blank leaves of her pocket Bible, which, if they expressed the feelings of her heart, as we may hope and trust they did, show at once that the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind had at least begun to dawn on her soul. The verses were from our Church selection of psalms and hymns, and expressed the desires of a soul longing after and rejoicing in the Lord :

“ My God, my portion, and my love,
My everlasting all ;
I’ve none but thee in heav’n above,
Or on this earthly ball.

"What empty things are all the skies,
And this inferior clod!
There's nothing here deserves my joys,
There's nothing like my God.

"How vain a toy is glitt'ring wealth,
If once compar'd to thee!
Or what's my safety, or my health,
Or all my friends to me?"

Wherever we can find an individual who in the sight of a heart-searching God can say, "These verses express the real sentiments of my heart," there, we may exclaim, is one, whom Heaven has pronounced wise, and whom God will shortly crown with glory and immortality. Their names will be had in everlasting remembrance, while all the great and guilty troublers of the earth will be viewed with abhorrence, and shortly consigned to oblivion, or rather to eternal contempt and remorse, to just indignation and everlasting pain.

O what a proof is this of the fallen, degenerate state of human nature, that man should ever prefer any thing to the favour of God! that any thing this fleeting life, this perishing world can offer, should for one moment induce him to turn from God, and to lose sight of those joys which are at his right hand for evermore!

Go, poor covetous earthworm, whose God is gold and whose riches are thy good things—and thou, poor haughty lump of clay, whose ambitious heart would rather

"Reign in hell than serve in heaven!"

and thou, vain man, whose idol is that fame which cometh from men as vain and as sensual as thyself—go and reap the sure, the certain, the just reward of your deeds. Heaven is not for you! Well may ye exclaim, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Well may ye desire to riot in your deceivings while they last, for their date is short. Soon that hour of tribulation will come, and all that eternity of anguish and woe which ye will not now believe, but must then encounter. Go! Those that know the Lord can live above the desire of your riches, your titles, or your fame. They can pity you as the outcasts of heaven, and shudder at those certain calamities which your madness will speedily entail upon your souls, in a world where unrepented deeds and desires like yours are as the worm that never dies, and as the fire that is never quenched. Yes, blessed be God, there are yet some to be found who can, in simplicity and godly sincerity, look up to the Author and Giver of all good, and say,

“ Let others stretch their arms like seas,
And grasp in all the shore;
Grant me the visits of thy grace,
And I desire no more.”

Such persons would most assuredly prefer a residence in the humblest dell of any parish in the kingdom to the halls of the most stately palace, where the inhabitants are living ignorant of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and are madly saying to themselves, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry.”

The trials of this family did not, however, end here. Not long after the death of my school girl, the youngest sister was by a fit of the croup cut suddenly off, and was conveyed as a corpse to that church whither she had just begun to attend with her affectionate mother. But a heavier calamity remained in a part of those children whom the Lord yet spared from death. The son, the first-born, the object of a fond doating mother's hopes and expectations, soon began to manifest, by his temper and actions, that all her hopes were ill founded, and all her expectations likely to end in the bitterness of heart-rending sorrow and disappointment; and such is still the prospect. The cottage is in neat and comfortable order—the old people are still living—and the son and his amiable wife are spared to each other as affectionate partners. But death has removed two out of the three daughters, and sin has deformed the whole moral cast of the son's mind, and blighted all the once fondly-cherished hopes of his parents. The Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, is however still remaining; and these sorrows, which have visited and which still rest upon their earthly dwelling, will, I trust, quicken their steps towards the uninterrupted and unmixed felicities of the kingdom of heaven.

No. VI.

THE difficulties that a few years ago presented themselves in imparting instruction to our poor children, and the fears and prejudices that prevailed in many minds as to the duty and expediency of educating the lower orders of the community, threw such impediments in the way of most of our village pastors, as greatly checked and vastly confined their usefulness. These difficulties, and fears, and prejudices, have now, in a great measure, vanished, because they have been lived down; and facts and experience have proved to the candid part of mankind, that the cultivation of the poor villager's mind in moral, religious, and useful subjects, is at once to rescue a being from a sort of half-savage nature, and to transform it into a social and conscientious character, to make it a useful member of society in this world, and to fit it for the company of saints and angels in the next. Well do we know, that in many instances the labour seems to be bestowed in vain. Sometimes our anxiety and admonitions receive little else than ingratitude and rebellion in return. Yet, if we go to the Scriptures for a rule of duty, our path is plain, and our duty is no matter of vain speculation, or of wavering choice. In the morning we are commanded to *sow the seed*, and in the evening we are forbidden

blessed Saviour, and pray to him as before. He will not be angry with you for being out of your head, or for what you then say. But, Sarah, do you ever talk to your mother and grandmother, and the rest of the family, about these things?"

"Yes, Sir; but they cry so."

"What makes them cry, my dear?"

"I don't know, Sir, but my mother says she can't bear it."

"Surely, Sarah, your mother is not angry with you, is she?"

"O no, Sir, she is not angry, but she does cry so, and says she can't bear it."

The grandmother now came in, and somewhat interrupted us.

"Bless her little heart," exclaimed the old woman, "she does talk so pretty to us, that it is very moving. I hope she'll get well again."

"That," I replied, "we must leave with Him in whose hands are our lives, and all that is connected with our term of days. Let us endeavour to be found in Christ, and then, living or dying, all will be well."

A few days after, I had an opportunity of chatting with the mother, and learning from her that the child frequently talked to her and to her father on the subjects of death and another world in such a manner as astonished and affected them, so as to throw them both into a flood of tears.

"O Sir," said the mother, "I hope the Lord will enable me to pray, 'Thy will be done;' but how shall I be able to bear up, if my dear girl is *taken away*? O how many times has she come

deafness and delirium prevented my conversing with her ; but when intervals of recollection occurred, I was often cheered by her simple, pious conversation. Shortly after the symptomatic deafness left her, and she became capable of hearing what I said, I one day found her quite free of delirium, with her little school-books lying on the pillow. For some time after I entered the cottage, I was quite alone with the child : the mother being out at work, and the old grandmother gone for water to a well in the neighbourhood. Approaching the bedside, I inquired of the child how she felt herself.

“ A litte better, but very badly yet, Sir.”

“ Sarah, you know how this fever has carried off several people : some of them seemed to be getting better ; and then, all at once, they got worse and worse again, and soon died. Now I hope you try to think about your soul, because we don't know but you may yet die. Do you think about these things ?”

“ Yes, Sir ; but I can't think much, my head is so bad ; I can only read a little, and then it makes my eyes pain me, and then I'm obliged to put down the book again.”

“ Do you think about Jesus Christ, and how he died for poor sinners, and loves to see little girls coming to him ? Do you pray to him, Sarah, to pardon your sins, and make you fit for heaven ?”

“ Yes, Sir, I do ; but then I get out of my head again, and don't know what I say.”

“ Well, my dear, when you come to yourself *again*, you must then try to think about your

often repeated to her mother what she had heard, and assisted her in finding the texts and passages, and in learning to read them. Calling at the widow's cottage one morning, I found it at the time clear of all its inhabitants; some I afterwards learnt were at work in the fields, and some occupied in little matters in the village. Being a good deal fatigued I sat down, and seeing some tracts, and one or two of the girls' writing-books on a little shelf within reach, I took down a copy-book, and found it to be the one in which Hannah had written several copies during the preceding winter. As I turned over its pages, I saw she had now and then written out some few passages of Scripture; but the contents of the last page pleased me most; and considering the poverty of the family and the natural and strong desires of young girls to possess finery, and to indulge in light and trifling amusements and giddy company, I could not but rejoice in the hope, that what I then read in Hannah's book was an index of the state of her heart. The page contained two verses of a hymn which she had at some time learnt or read, and then followed a prayer, or part of a prayer, of her own: all of which I then copied out, and which I will now transcribe from the very scrap of paper I then copied them on.

"The Word more precious than Gold.

"Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the Word of God afford;
All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and med'cine shield and sword."

Let the world account me poor ;
Having this, I need no more.

“ Shall I envy then the miser,
Doting on his golden store ?
Sure I am I should be wiser ;
I am rich, 'tis he is poor.
Jesus gives me in his word
Food and med'cine, shield and sword.” *

“ O Lord God Almighty, look upon me—
O most merciful Father, have mercy upon
thine unworthy child—give her the under-
standing of that precious Bible, and renew a
right spirit within her, set her affections on
things above, and not upon things below. O
most merciful Father, fit and prepare her for
death and judgment. O blessed Jesus, look
upon thine unworthy servant, not worthy of
those mercies which——”

Here the simple strain of supplication was
broken off, seemingly by the interruption of
some one coming in when she was thus ex-
pressing the desires of her soul on paper. There
was, however, enough written to induce me
to exclaim, “ Yes, Hannah, thou art rich, far
richer with these sentiments in thine heart
than all the treasures of the earth could make
thee if destitute of such principles.” At that
time, there was but one cottage in the village
more forlorn than the one in which I found
myself sitting, and hardly a girl of fifteen years
of age more destitute of earthly comforts within
our parish than was Hannah.

* Olney Hymns, ii. 63.

The reader will rejoice to hear, that Hannah went on very steadily after this. The things of the world did not gain on her affections! She conducted herself with much propriety as a single woman, and is now married; and has not only taught her husband to read his Bible, but has been very instrumental in bringing him forward in the ways of the Lord. Their cottage is remarkably clean, and they are a very happy young couple, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort and peace of his ways. Little does she think, and as little is she likely to know, that her humble history has thus far come before the world.

I will now mention one instance more which occurred in my present parish. Maria was the eldest girl, and the oldest but one of a family of ten children living, when the father and his household quitted our common to occupy a little land and a blacksmith's shop in another parish. Maria had been from the commencement of our Sunday school a member of the senior class, and as such had attended a little exposition on Sunday evenings. Her conduct was quite satisfactory, but there was nothing in it that excited any particular notice. She was very attentive, but could neither read so well nor learn off so much of Scripture in a given time as several of the same class. Yet, as it afterwards appeared, she was one who pondered in her heart what she heard, and often on returning home related to her mother what she could recollect of the address. She would then look out the hymns we had sung.

and read there, and sometimes make a few remarks of her own, or relate what observations I had made on them. To all this the mother would give a very attentive ear; but she never made any remarks of her own, either in a way of approbation or disapprobation. On one or two occasions, when I called at the house and had an opportunity of conversing with the mother, I had good reason to hope that her mind was in an inquiring and advancing state, but her numerous family confined her much at home. After a while, it pleased the Lord that the premature birth of, I think, her twelfth child, threw the earthly frame at once on the verge of destruction, and but a few days remained before the spirit was called to appear before God. She was partly aware of her situation, and endeavoured to meet her hastening summons in the principles and hope of the Christian. And now it was that much came to my knowledge, both as it respected Maria and as it concerned her mother, which I did not expect to learn. Maria saw her mother's end approaching, quite as soon as the latter saw it for herself; and feeling very much anxiety for the state of her soul, at length broke through all reserve, and one day asked,

"Mother, do you endeavour to commit your soul into the hands of Christ?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I do; and I hope he will save me."

"Shall I read to you, mother?"

"Yes, do; I have often wished it," said the poor sufferer; "but you seemed ashamed. O Maria; you don't know what a comfort it often

has been to me, when you came home, and told and read to me what you had heard in the evening. I always wished you to say more, but you seemed ashamed."

"No, mother," replied Maria, "I was not ashamed: but you know you never made any reply, and I didn't know whether you liked it or not. If I had known you liked it, I should have said much more, but sometimes I thought you didn't like it."

"Ah, my girl! you little know how great a comfort it was to me."

In short, it now appeared that the Lord had made use of this kind of preaching, if it may be so called, of the daughter, greatly to the awakening, instructing, and comforting the soul of the parent. And in her last hours, this girl acted in the double capacity of a nurse and spiritual guide.

The mother died, I trust in the Lord; and Maria, though very young, had to take the charge and management of this numerous family of small children; and in that part of duty she is now most laudably exerting every effort of body and mind, to the great relief of her afflicted father and the comfort and satisfaction of all the children, and, I may add to the joy of her pastor. May the Lord preserve her in her present simplicity and modesty of manner and spirit, and never permit a guilty and ensnaring generation to turn her heart from that Saviour whom I believe she now loves and desires to serve!

Before I conclude this paper, I must drop one word of admonition and entreaty to parents who

have children under instruction at Sunday schools. Do, I beseech you, encourage them to open their minds to you at home, and to relate in your own chimney-corner the lessons and admonitions they may have listened to at school or at church. Satan prevents much good being done in this way by fostering a spirit of timidity, of reserve, of fear, among the members of the same family. And to such a length does he carry these impressions at times, that, as in the case of the woman before us, the parent is constrained to be silent even before her own child, and that at a time when the heart is full, and she is longing to converse freely on the things concerning their mutual and everlasting peace.

In some future communication I may, perhaps, give another anecdote or two of similar benefits arising to parents through the medium of Sunday schools.

No. VII.

It is our privilege to look out for and to notice the gracious answers which our Father who is in heaven gives to our prayers; and to mark the smiles bestowed on our Christian labours, by Him who sent us here to work while it is called to-day. Those who are earnestly labouring in Sunday schools, and are anxiously looking forward to the result of such labours, should not only commit themselves, their efforts, and their little flock, into his hands, from time to time in prayer for his holy Spirit to direct, sanctify, and bless the teacher and the pupils; but should also frequently review what the Lord appears actually to be doing either among the children whom they teach, or the relatives of those children, through their instrumentality. This will encourage the teacher to labour and not faint; it will show, from time to time, that however poor and despised the earthen vessel may be in itself, yet that the Lord can and often does put his inestimable treasure into it, and cause that treasure to be poured out from such worthless vessels to the enriching of immortal souls. It is now many hundred years since the Lord declared that he would perfect praise out of the mouth of babes; nor through all these long succeeding periods has he ever been unmindful of his promise. On the contrary, as it concerns

our own land especially, he has gone on in the strength of his power, and displays, increasingly displays, the riches of his grace in behalf of children: so that not only has more instruction been furnished them, but also more of the moral and religious effects of that instruction has been visible, both in the character and conduct of many of the children themselves, and in the improved morals of many of their parents and relatives. It is my object in this communication to detail a few instances in proof of the effects produced among the elder branches of families through the instrumentality of their children who attended, or are now attending, Sunday schools. I might particularize more than one or two cases wherein the children have taught their parents to read, until they could examine the Holy Scriptures for themselves; but I shall no further notice these advantages, great as they certainly are, than to say that such has been the case, and that such is now the course of mental improvement going on in some of our cottages scattered over retired and beautiful though unnoticed commons. Let us, then, look at another class of proofs than those of parents being taught by their children to read the Holy Scriptures.

John P—— was, some years ago, one of my sickly and fretful parishioners. His wife had become, I trust, seriously in earnest in the pursuit of eternal life, and their two eldest girls were in our school. Phœbe was not more than ten years old, when one day her father was taken dangerously ill with internal inflammation. *In the agonies of his sufferings and the terrors*

of his mind he sent for me to administer some relief. I remained with him until I saw a portion of his bodily pains relieved by the application of suitable means ; and then, considering it a fit time once more to point out to him what I had oft-times before urged, namely, his discontented, fretful state of mind, his distracting and criminal anxiety about the events of the morrow ; which were ever filling him with fears, lest food and raiment should fail ; and moreover, the folly and criminality of his neglecting that bread which cometh down from heaven ; and setting at nought those riches which are incorruptible and undefiled, and pass not away : to all this he listened, and made but few replies. In the course of our conversation the children were named, and something was said relative to their being directed to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. John paused awhile, and then exclaimed, " Ah, Sir ! what a rare thing it is for them to have such learning ! There is that girl, Phœbe, of mine—O if I were but like that girl—if I could but make such a prayer as she can make !"

" Why, John, what about Phœbe ? what do you mean about her making prayers ?"

" O Sir," he again repeated, " if I could but make such a prayer as she can——"

" Well," I said, " but tell me something about it—what do you mean ?"

" Why," Sir, it was but a few days ago, when on going up to my chamber, I heard somebody talking something, as I thought, in the other room ; and so I stood still and listened.

and who should it be but my girl Phœbe making such a prayer! O if I could but make such a prayer as that was! There, Sir, she went on, I'm sure 'twas without book; and she prayed for her sister, and little brother, and mother, and for me her poor wicked father,—when, Sir, I scarcely ever tried to pray for myself. Only think, Sir, for that girl to make such a prayer for her father, when he didn't pray for himself!"

In short, I found that his mind and conscience had been more powerfully arrested by this circumstance of his child's prayer, than by any thing he had ever heard from me, or from any other person, either at church or elsewhere. Of course I endeavoured to follow up these convictions, and to represent the awful consequence that must follow, if the prayer and dawning piety and Christian character of his child should hereafter rise up in judgment to his condemnation. He was living when I quitted the parish, but has since departed and given in his account before a righteous Judge. Of the state of his soul I never could feel satisfied; but of this I am quite sure, that the deepest convictions of sin, and the strongest remonstrances of conscience, which he ever experienced, were produced on his mind through the instrumentality of his little girl's prayer, thus overheard by him in a day when he prayed neither for her nor for himself.

In the history of "Pious Harriet," my readers *have seen* one instance of domestic worship *being introduced* into a respectable family through

the persuasion and instrumentality of a child. I shall now record another of the same nature. Mary C—— was somewhat older than her school-companion Phœbe P——, of whom mention has just been made. Mary's mother is now with the spirits of the just made perfect. About a year before she exchanged prayer on earth for eternal praise in heaven, she related the following particulars to me: That it was on a Sunday evening when Mary returned from my room, and found her parents sitting in the chimney-corner reading; their books being laid by, Mary began to tell her mother what she could recollect of the evening's instructions, and particularly dwelt on my having told the girls that they must not be ashamed to pray at home, and how it was a lamentable thing that family prayer was so much neglected in poor people's houses: that many parents and children seemed to be ashamed of serving God.

"But, mother," said Mary, "Mr. M—— says we girls must not be ashamed of these things."

"To be sure not," replied the mother; "for if we are ashamed of Christ, you know that he says he will be ashamed of us."

"Yes, mother, the Testament says so; but then, mother, why don't we have prayer in our house before we go to bed?"

This was, indeed, coming to the point, and the mother and father hung down their heads, and answered not a word—all was silence for some minutes, until the child again asked, "Mother,

why don't we go to prayer all together before we go to bed?"

The parents were now confounded and self-condemned, and began to defend themselves as well as they could, by both answering their child's question with, "I can't make a pray."—"Nor I, I am sure." Still they felt that the thing ought to be done, and they also felt a wish that they had the power and courage to perform it; but this neither of them that evening possessed. The subject was, however, talked over for a quarter of an hour longer, and at length it was proposed to the child herself to make the prayer. They accordingly all knelt down, and the mother declared to me that Mary made such a suitable and affecting prayer as threw both her and her husband into a flood of tears all the while they were on their knees. From that evening to the death of the mother and the breaking up of the family, they had domestic worship performed by one or other of the parents.

The last instance I shall produce here, is one on which my mind has often reflected with much satisfaction. John B—— was a sober industrious man, whose weekly labour, added to the small profits which his wife procured by selling gingerbread und sugar-plums to the children of the village, supported his family with decency for the three first years after I knew them. About that time he was attacked with the first decided symptoms of a consumption, and from *thence* he continued to pass on from one stage to

another of his complaint, until, after lingering for a year and a half, he at length departed, I doubt not, for a better world. At the commencement of his illness he was a stranger to every thing like real experimental religion. He kept his church, as he termed his weekly attendance there, and he worked hard and paid every body their own, and was neither a drunkard nor swearer. But, alas! with all this real decency of character, and amidst all his self-exalted virtues, he knew not God; he felt not his sins; he saw not the necessity of being born again, nor had he any of those spiritual conceptions of heaven which endear it to those whose hearts and treasures are above. It however pleased the Lord to open the eyes of his understanding, and to renew his heart, while he laid on his body the pains and maladies which were to bring it down to the grave. His gradual and important change from a child of nature to a child of grace was of a very clear and satisfactory nature, and his latter end was peace. He retained the faculties of his mind to the very last, and was attending to the reading of the Word of God, and to the prayers of those in his dying chamber, until within a very few minutes of his departure.

But the reader is not to consider the Village Pastor as the only instrument employed by the great Bishop and Shepherd of our souls in bringing on this man's soul in its way to the kingdom of heaven. No: for John B—— had a daughter whose readings and conversation and prayers were greatly blessed to his instruction and comfort. Sarah was among the senior girls of our

Sunday school. She was one whose conduct never occasioned me any uneasiness ; but over whom the Lord enabled me to rejoice as a striking instance of his blessing on the means made use of for training up children in the fear and admonition of their Maker. Ten years have now elapsed since she first attended my ministry and my school ; and at the end of those years I cannot but bless the Lord for making and keeping this my scholar in a great degree what I could desire all the people of my charge to be. Sarah had good sense and penetration enough to mark the fatal strides which consumption was making on the constitution of that father whom she greatly loved ; and often did she weep and say to me, “ O Sir, how shall I ever bear up under the loss which I see will soon overtake me ? My dear father will die. The thought almost distracts me now ; and what shall I do when the time comes ? ”

On these occasions I endeavoured to direct her to Him whose compassionate mind considers whereof we are made ; who has declared that he will not lay upon us more than he will enable us to bear ; and that his strength shall be perfected in our weakness.

I repeatedly told her that I felt confident the Lord would strengthen and support her, and from time to time I encouraged her naturally timid mind to forget herself, and to endeavour to consider and benefit her parent while life was continued to him. Neither John nor his wife could read. This was a subject of great regret *to him now his soul was anxiously looking for-*

ward to an eternal world. It was, therefore, his frequent practice to make his little girl, Elizabeth, read to him; but she was too young to converse on what she read. During the last half year of his life, Sarah was living at service in the village, only a few score yards from her father's cottage. The people with whom she resided were very indulgent, and frequently allowed her to return home for a little while on purpose to read to and converse with him, and occasionally to sit up for a part of the night in his sick room. It was now very evident that the Lord gave her strength according to her day. As the father grew fainter, the daughter increased in strength, in Christian resignation and fortitude, and was thus enabled to be of very great service in conversing and praying with him, as well as in reading suitable portions of the Word of God. So much refreshment did his soul gain by these affectionate and Christian labours of his child, that often when I called at his cottage, he has informed me that Sarah had previously been with him reading, praying, or conversing about the things of salvation; and scarcely ever did he mention a circumstance of this nature without lifting his eyes toward heaven, and exclaiming, "O that blessed girl of mine! how can I be thankful enough for such a child?"

He was permitted to enjoy the presence and the prayers of that child to the very close of his life; for the night on which he died, she and one of the neighbours sat up with him, and

Sarah prayed by him to within the last four or five minutes of his earthly existence. She then saw him depart in peace ; and had no doubt but that he died in the Lord, rested from all his labours, and was blessed for ever. As to herself, He who had taken from her an earthly father whom she tenderly loved, and whose loss she once feared would quite break her heart, was now pleased to support and strengthen her beyond all her expectations and hopes. She bore her loss as a Christian child ought to bear it ; and since that time, as far as I can learn and judge, the same gracious God has kept her in the love and fear of his blessed Son Jesus Christ, in the watchful, humble, unobtrusive walk of a real disciple, and in the path of usefulness as a teacher of others where she herself was once taught. These are a few instances in proof of what was before advanced, that in our endeavours to impart Christian instruction to children, we are doing what the Lord often blesses to the edification and comfort of their parents and elder relations. Let these and similar instances encourage us to labour, to be "steadfast and unmoveable, always endeavouring to abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labours will not be in vain in the Lord." But let it be borne in mind by all who thus labour and long to see the Lord prosper the work of their hands, that much of that gratification will be proportioned to the spirit in which they labour, and the motives which actuate them to begin and to continue their exertions. Sunday schools may

be formed, and zealously conducted, and made to exhibit a very fascinating external appearance, and yet there may be little of pure simple single-minded Christianity at the bottom of all those labours. A party spirit and political motives may actuate, and it is to be feared often have actuated, the conductors of schools under various denominations; and vanity itself has not unfrequently spurred on some to take an active part in these institutions. True, the children may, through the mercy of God, be benefited; they may be taught to read, and to get off catechisms, and large portions of Scripture, and at a future day these advantages may be blessed to their soul's salvation; but let not any such teachers or conductors of schools marvel, if *they* are not permitted to see the fruits of the Spirit following the works of the flesh. Whatever just cause there may be for any party of Christians preferring their own sect and denomination to any other, yet there is in pure Christianity a great and grand principle which rises above every other consideration on earth, as it ranks above all others in the kingdom of heaven. That principle is a simple, single desire to glorify God and to benefit the souls of men; to rescue immortal beings from a state of ignorance and enmity against God: to bring them acquainted with that salvation which Jesus Christ came on earth to procure for all who repent and believe; and thus, as instruments in the Lord's hands, to forward in their souls that state of knowledge, of humility, of faith.

of fear and love, which makes the sinful children of Adam meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus labouring we shall reap if we faint not; and though the bigots of every denomination may choose to act and to think widely different from us, yet our work will one day be owned of God.

No. VIII.

" O first of human blessings, and supreme,
Fair Peace ! how lovely, how delightful thou !
By whose wide tie the kindred sons of men,
Like brothers, live in amity combin'd,
And unsuspecting faith ; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.
O Peace ! thou source and soul of social life,
Blest be the man divine who gives us thee."

" AND so, Sir," said a poor man the other day,
" it is going to be all war again, people say ?"

" Yes, John, there is already, and, I fear,
there will ere long be much havoc and blood-
shed in some countries not far off. But, blessed
be the God of peace, our rulers appear to be
too wise and too just to imbue their hands in
this work of human destruction."

" But, Sir, shall we be able to keep clear
of it ? they say it will be all about us."

" I hope we shall, John : of this I am sure,
that if the Lord ordains peace for us, none can
plunge us into war. We are a sinful nation ;
but still there are many in our land who pray
for the country, that it may be preserved in
the faith, and fear, and love, in the peace, and
grace, and mercy of God their Father. Should
he hear their prayer, and return an answer of
peace, then even our enemies will be at peace

with us. Thousands may fall in one country, and tens of thousands in another, but the evil shall not come near us. Let us ever bear in mind, that all hearts are in his hands, and all events under his control.

“ His is that power
Unseen that rules th’ illimitable world,
That guides its motions, from the brightest star
To the least dust of this sin-tainted world ;
While man, who madly deems himself the lord
Of all, is naught but weakness and dependence.”

“ To be sure, Sir, ’tis a great blessing to be at peace, and to have the Lord go with us as he promises, in our goings out and comings in. O what a sad, cruel thing this war must be !”

“ So sad and cruel, John, so impure, so wicked, so horrible, that you can form no conception of it. You have lived at home, and known of it only by report. A little, and but a little even of the tale of that slaughter and misery which other countries have seen and felt, has reached your ears. Had much more been told you, you would have still been as unable to realize its horrors to your mind, as those people are who hear accounts of burning mountains and earthquakes. Now, John, a person must behold the burning mountain and feel the earthquake ; he must stand among the falling buildings and the mangled bodies of their inhabitants ; he must gaze on the descending ruin of liquid fire, and see the abundance of flame mount up as it were to heaven ; he must feel the earth reel and rock beneath him, *and listen to the groans of the dying and the*

shrieks of the survivors, before he can form any just conception of the awful realities of those visitations of the Almighty. And so must a man see and experience what war is, before he can form any just conceptions of its sins and miseries. He must pass over the field of battle, and lead his way through the burning village, the blood-stained cottages, and the desolated corn-fields. He must look on a tract of country, yesterday in the bloom and beauty of nature, but to-day a wilderness. He must go into what was once the peaceful residence of a domestic circle; but instead of finding the different members of the family collected around their cheerful board, he must learn that the sons are killed either in the ranks of battle, or cruelly murdered because they refused to forsake their homes. He must see the daughter expiring under the cruel agonies which brutal soldiers have inflicted, first by violating her chastity, and then by stabbing her bosom with their bayonets. He must learn, that the young children are fled with their distracted mother into the concealment of some neighbouring wood, while all this tale of sorrow is told by the forlorn, and wretched, helpless old grandsire, whom he finds weeping amidst the blood, the desolation, and the mangled corpses of his family. When any man has surveyed the scene thus far, let him hasten to the late field of battle, and see at one view what horrid havoc, what inexpressible misery, what Satanic effects are produced by war. There all the varieties of *its general carnage* will exhibit themselves to

all his senses; wounded dying men, and wounded dying horses, mingling their groans, and pouring out their life-blood into the same channel; friends and enemies, swords, muskets, helmets, fallen in one indiscriminate heap; some with their faces on the earth, biting the ground in the agonies of death; and others rolling their convulsed eyes for the last time towards that sun which they are to behold no more for ever.

As the work of slaughter ends for the day, let him follow the mangled, wounded multitudes, as they are carried to some rude building, or laid in rows beneath the shelter of a hedge, until the surgeon can amputate the limbs of some and bind up the wounds of others. Then hour after hour let him mark the sufferings of those wounded soldiers, and count up the deaths that day after day thin their ranks. When he has done this, he will be enabled to realize in part what are the sad and cruel effects of war; he will feel convinced, that its horrors and evils are infinitely more deplorable than those produced by eruptive volcanos and destructive earthquakes."

My neighbour stood aghast while I spoke; and as I ended, he implored the divine Being to save us as a nation and people from the sins and calamities of war. He then hastened on to his labour, and I proceeded forward towards a distant cottage, where one of my people lay patiently waiting the hour which would soon arrive, and dismiss the happy soul from a pained and dying body. The subject of war, however, *kept possession* of my thoughts, and many more

of its evils passed and repassed before the mind, until I felt most powerfully the truth of that Scripture, "Madness is in the heart of man while he lives, and after that he goes down to the dead."

Surely, among all the unhallowed practices which our pretended Christian nations tolerate and approve, none so completely prove the unchristian state of those nations as that of war. Whatever may be advanced in justification of positive self-defence against the actual violence of bloody and unprincipled invaders, there can be none produced, on the authority of Scripture, to justify or even palliate one out of a hundred of all the wars that have ever been waged in the world. We are not surprised at any thing which men and nations may think or do, so long as they know not God, or so long as they reject his holy word. Whether we survey the ambitious, bloodthirsty spirit and practice of ancient, polished, heathen Greece or Rome, or whether we contemplate the brutal passions, the tiger-like disposition and depredations of northern savages or of Oriental idolaters, all is one piece of consistency; because man in a savage as well as in a polished but heathen state, is, as has been long truly styled, "half a beast and half a devil." But that men and nations professing to fear God and to believe the Holy Scriptures, that men and nations professing to be looking to the Lord Jesus Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, should maintain such favourable opinions of war—should see so little of its abominations,

and feel so little compunction at entering on all its dire and dismal operations, and that too on the slightest pretence, and often with no pretence at all, is most astonishing. That men professing to believe in a future state and a just judgment, should, from no other real motives than those of a selfish nature, "wade as far as they can through slaughter to a throne," nay to a very pitiful pre-eminence above their neighbours; and for these poor, dying distinctions, willingly shut the gates of mercy on mankind—surely this is mockery of religion, and the height of profanation and contempt of God. O thou meek and lowly Saviour! thou Prince of peace! thou God of love and mercy! how long shall thy name, thy word, and thy religion be thus mocked and blasphemed? What claim, what authority can kings and princes challenge to style themselves "*most Christian*,"* while war is held up by them in high and honourable esteem, and practised in all its horrors on every trifling occasion, and its deeds of blood and darkness are made the straight and sure way to riches, titles, and honours among men? Blessed Saviour! at thy birth the host of heaven proclaimed "peace on earth and good will towards men!" It was peace which thou thyself didst preach and command, which thou didst bequeath to thy followers as their duty and solace across the waste howling wilderness of a distracted world. Yet, alas! there have been but

* The kings of France are styled "*Most Christian Majesty*."

few among thy professed followers who have valued the boon, or endeavoured to promote its extension in the world. O that thou wouldest hasten the time when men should love one another, and nations learn war no more !

When, with the Gospel of this blessed Saviour in our hands, and the subjects of death, judgment and eternity in our minds, we sit down and read the history of those bloody wars, those ambitious pursuits, those diabolical sentiments and desolating practices which our own and other nations, called Christian, have maintained, one is struck with amazement that the sweeping judgments and righteous indignation of Heaven have not been again and again poured out on these portions of the earth. The evils attendant on war, which I mentioned to my neighbour John, form but a part of those which are seen and felt on earth. A long train of heart-rending calamities might be added to what was there only hinted at ; these, however, we will now pass over, and for one moment direct our thoughts to that eternal state which awaits the dying warrior, in common with dying men of every other description. Were warriors to die like the horses which bear them into the rage of battle, were there no existence after the present life, no account to be given in at a future tribunal, no heaven to be lost or gained, no region of unspeakable and eternal misery to be avoided or partaken of, then would the soldier's folly in throwing away his life be less conspicuous, and the prince's criminality in urging his subjects on to their destruction be less hei-

nous. But the case is not so. After death comes the judgment; after time is concluded, comes eternity; after the day of probation is ended, comes heaven or hell, as the unalterable, the eternal residence of every man. To die is at all times, and under all circumstances, a solemn matter. To depart hence unpardoned, unsanctified, and consequently unsaved, is the prelude to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for ever. Now when we consider an army of one hundred thousand men marching to a campaign, in which they will slay perhaps two thirds of as numerous an army of their adversaries, and leave two thirds of their own number dead on the plain—when we consider the awful profaneness which pervades such a collected host of men in their general manners, the rage, and lust, and murder that operate in the hour of battle and in the day of plunder—when we call to mind, that in the very heat and full exercise of all these unhallowed passions and pursuits their souls are dismissed to the righteous tribunal of heaven, there to be judged by Him who hath commanded all men to love each other as brethren—when we read as from the very lips of this Judge himself, that there is neither repentance nor reformation in the grave, that at death he who is unholy must remain unholy still, that nothing which defileth can enter into his kingdom—when, I say, we thus reflect as we gaze on the heaps of slaughtered warriors, O what can charity itself furnish to soothe our grief or allay our fears as to the *final state* of by far the greater portion of all

who are thus untimely cut off? What shadow of a plea worthy one moment's hearing, can those princes and senators advance in justification of their conduct, or in extenuation of all the accumulated and eternal misery they have brought on so many of their fellow-creatures, whose immortality is now their greatest curse, because they have passed away from this state of probation uncalled by their Maker, and unprepared to give up their account? They have closed their period of time, but not repented—finished their days, but not reformed. They have died in the perpetration of acts which God has forbidden, and sealed, for ever sealed, their unspeakable, their eternal misery. We hear, indeed, much sophistry and many harangues setting forth to the world, how that expediency, necessity, and even positive duty, call upon rulers to marshal the peaceable inhabitants of the land, and to send them forth from time to time to slay and be slain; but if we look to the word of God for an explanation of motives which actuate men on these occasions, we are informed, that “wars and fightings come of men's lusts.” (James iv. 1.) And whoever reads, with a mind open to conviction, through the history of this or any other nation, will infallibly be led to this conclusion, that the most glaring ambition, the most pitiful envy, the broadest injustice, and the most criminal disregard of human sufferings, have been the leading motives and actuating principles of by far the greater part of all those who have planned and proclaimed the many wars, which have distracted and polluted the

earth. Expediency is a term most convenient and well suited to varnish over every wicked action which Jesuits at the altar, and ambitious senators at the council-board, have perpetrated. Caiaphas, the infamous high priest, argued on the ground of expediency, and Pontius Pilate, the time-serving governor, did the same, when the one adjudged the Saviour of the world to death, and the other gave him up to be crucified. Were it not for the base passions of ambition, revenge, envy, and covetousness actuating those who govern the nations, we should hear little of the necessity of war, and not once in an hundred years would the plea of duty dare to advance itself in justification of drawing the sword.

O how will those wholesale murderers confront a holy God and an assembled world of pure and happy spirits? Fain would they persuade themselves that no such interview will ever take place. But the day is hastening on when they must stand forth, not to receive the idle acclamations of a guilty infidel multitude of wicked men, but to tell out all the real, all the hidden springs of action, all the true motives and actual principles that urged them on in the praise and practice of war. Then shall a collected world hear them confess, in the bitterness of unavailing sorrow and madness of unceasing despair, "We planned and carried on wars, that we might exalt ourselves on the ruin of others, that we might make us a name upon the earth. The miseries we brought on our people, the burdens with which we *loaded our own country*, and the fetters we

rivettted on others ; the famine and pestilence we occasioned in the earth, and the souls we hurried into another world—these were circumstances considered light as the dust on the balance when weighed against the gratification of humbling our contemporaries, of extending our own power, and augmenting our own fame. We thirsted for universal dominion, and we desired to be renowned above men. The fabric of our fame was cemented with blood ; and when our names were wafted to the ends of the earth, it was in the shrill cry of suffering humanity, in the curses and imprecations of those whom our swords had reduced to despair : but we sorrowed not at these lamentations, we grieved not at the miseries we had produced in the earth, we were renowned among men, and we disregarded the approbation of God.”

Others, that is, the great mass of those who compose the ranks of slaughterers, will have in general no better reason to give for becoming warriors and shedding the blood of their fellow men, than that idleness led them to prefer warfare to honest labour ; vanity prompted them to exchange a plain garment for a tawdry uniform ; and a love of that praise which comes from man, induced them to set at naught that praise which comes from God. They will be ready to confess, and that with truth, that they had no particular wish to destroy their fellow-creatures, they felt no particular enmity against any other tribe or class of men ; but as they had become soldiers, they were led to the war, and the business of war was to slay and be slain. O the

madness of the heart of man! Well, of this blessed fact we are certain, that as soon as our pretended Christian nations become in reality nations of Christians, war will be learnt no more. The past transactions of men will then be viewed as they ought to be, and acquire suitable titles and appropriate definitions. Then the history of the warrior will excite only pity and surprise at the folly and wickedness of such a profession as that of arms. And the name of the conqueror's grave will be "the grave of the destroyer of men." Then will the ancient Briton, who offered his own fellow-creatures in sacrifice to his idol gods, and the more modern Briton, who trafficked in human blood, and bartered the defenceless children of Africa for lucre of gain, and their still more modern descendants, who justified war, and chose its profession as one most high and honourable to man; then, I say, will all these be remembered with an equal mixture of pity, surprise, and holy indignation. Yes, the day is advancing when the world will bless God that such crimes no longer exist, but in the records of past ages; that such doctrines are approved of only in hell. As yet, the earth groans while it drinks in the blood of its inhabitants, and the blood of man cries to heaven; and soon these cries and groans will receive a reply. Nay, that reply is now given, and has been given through all the past sanguinary ages of the world—given in strains of righteous indignation, and displays the retributive justice of Heaven. Thus will the life of this *world pass on* for an appointed season, and then

the change cometh when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth — when swords shall be beaten into plow-shares and spears into pruning-hooks—when princes and senators shall no longer bid the hostile legions slay each other, nor such a person as a warrior be found on the earth. Meanwhile, it is the duty of the Christian, in whatever rank he moves, to inculcate peace on earth and good will towards men; to exhibit to all within his reach the genuine spirit and true principles of the Gospel of Christ, and to show that those wars and contentions that now again threaten the repose of Europe, and bid fair to deluge many countries with blood, can have no warrant from Scripture, nor their princes any pretensions to the title of “Most Christian Majesty,” while they so wantonly spill the blood of those men for whose salvation, for whose present and eternal peace, the Son of God came down from heaven, and suffered, and died. May the Lord rebuke the madness of both princes and people, and command the jarring elements of a troubled world into peace!

“O stretch thy reign, fair Peace, from shore to shore,
Till conquest cease, and slavery be no more,
Till the freed Indians in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves.
Exil'd by thee from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds, shall barbarous Discord dwell:
Gigantic Pride, pale Terror, gloomy Care,
And mad Ambition shall attend her there;
There purple Vengeance bath'd in gore, retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires;
There hateful Envy her own snakes shall feel,
And Persecution mourn her broken wheel;
There Faction roar, Rebellion bite her chain,
And gasping Furies thirst for blood in vain.”

No. IX.

"HE," says St. Paul, "who desires the office of a bishop desires a good work." Good, undoubtedly, such an office is in itself; and good in its effects on mankind; and good to the pastor's own soul, when entered into from proper motives, and discharged as in the sight of God, according to the abilities given for its exercise. But among those who desire and enter upon the office, there are few, comparatively speaking, even among the pious and well-intentioned, who, at the time of their ordination, are aware of many of those trials and discouragements which are found by experience to attend their course. In the day when they embark in this arduous undertaking, we may conceive the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls addressing them as he once did his disciple when on earth: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Yes, there are many lessons to be communicated, many exercises of soul to be passed through, and many obstacles and discouragements to be encountered in future and successive periods, which, if set before them at the day of their ordination, would present so disheartening a picture as to deter most men from approaching the altar to minister in the priest's office. Among those numerous trials which are sure to occasion *much and constant anxiety*, and not unfrequently

to afflict the pastor's heart, may be named the falling away of those young people who for a time seemed to run well; and whose conduct had raised his expectations, and cheered his hopes, that shortly they would be useful and ornamental members of Christ's church here, and finally become his crown of rejoicing hereafter. True, it is a secondary, but it is not an inconsiderable motive of action on the part of the flock, to endeavour so to conduct themselves in the world and towards God, as not willingly to grieve and oppress the heart of the pastor, who loves them, and watches over their course as one that must give an account. Yet this motive ought to have some weight. Could those young persons, indeed, enter into half the anxieties, half the cares, and fears, and sorrows, which their ministers feel for them, they would sometimes halt and say, "How can I do this great folly, and wound the feelings and afflict the heart of my best friend!" This would especially have been the case with those young women who have so often grieved the writer of this paper, and many of his brethren in the ministry throughout the villages in the kingdom. I say throughout the *villages*, because those pastors who reside in such situations cannot but know and enter into the cares of all their flock. The children grow up in their schools, and advance to years of maturity under their inspection, and gain upon their affection and esteem as they draw nearer to that period when they are to launch into the world, and act their several and respective parts *on the stage of life*, to the comfort or distress of

those who have endeavoured to conduct them into the way of peace ; who for a long course of time have urged on them the duty and privilege of choosing life, that their souls might live.

Satan has his snares and enticements suited to every age, and rank, and station, and sex. Dress and finery are undoubtedly the most common and successful temptations with which he assaults the girls of our villages, and by which he leads an awful number of them captive at his will. After a little more time has passed over their heads, he sends young men in their way, first to gain their affections, and then, by the influence they have over their hearts, to draw them off from all serious attention to those things which make for their everlasting peace. Here, alas ! the enemy is but too successful. Here it is that the pastor trembles for the lambs of his flock. Here it is that he has to lament over many that once bid fair for heaven, but now seem rather to prefer the paths of the destroyer. What often makes the danger two-fold greater to these young females, and consequently enhances the pastor's anxiety for their souls, is, that many of their parents, being worldly, ignorant, and perhaps profane characters themselves, neither see the peril nor impropriety of their children associating, at an early age, with almost any young man who may address them. If the suitor be not a most vile and notorious character, they see nothing to object to. They have no idea that their daughters can suffer from such an acquaintance, and perhaps they actually approve of the young *man's worldly sentiments* more than of their

daughter's religious ones. All this is certainly the case in many, very many families, in our villages and hamlets. What, then, is the natural consequence of all these unhappy circumstances? No other than the falling back into the world of many a young person who, but for forming such acquaintances, would, humanly speaking, have gone on in the ways of godliness, established their characters among the wisest and best of their neighbours, strengthened the hands of their ministers, have been useful in their day and generation; and, finally, whether they died unmarried, or were united to a suitable character in wedlock, would have departed full of that hope which maketh not ashamed. It is no easy matter for the devoutest young person to give the Lord that place in the heart which he demands, when the affections are in any considerable degree engaged towards the creature. Hence, could ministers and Christian parents prevail, they would at times warn the younger part of their charge to shun every advance, to avoid every step which would break in on their peace of mind and spiritual progress, by allowing their affections to fix on any person until Providence seemed to present an object desirous of their love, and worthy of their esteem, as being likely to promote their present comfort and eternal happiness. When that in sound judgment appears to be the case, parents would do well not to interpose unnecessary hindrances, or excite petty objections to the completion of the parties wishes, but rather to promote them, *that they might "serve the Lord without dia-*

traction." It has been the writer's practice, ever since he entered the ministry, to meet the senior girls, female teachers, and some of their mothers and elderly neighbours, on the Sunday evenings, between six and eight o'clock; when instruction is communicated in a more familiar way, and admonitions given in a closer manner, and with a more personal application, than would be proper at church. Here the duties these young people have to perform, the snares they have to shun, the tempers they have to cultivate, the associates they should choose, and the chaste, and modest, and moral path they are called upon by God to pursue, are brought forward with as much distinctness as is proper. Sometimes the history of pious young women, who have waged a good warfare, and finished their course with joy, is brought forward to animate and instruct them; at other times, examples of those who once run well, but were afterwards ensnared and carried down the stream of iniquity, and perished in their sins, or at least departed full of bitter anguish and almost in despair, are produced to warn and alarm them. In one word, *decision of character, and consistency in their general conduct*, are here pressed home on their consciences as absolutely necessary to their present comfort and eternal felicity. The reflecting reader will not be surprised to hear, that these little services become a kind of winnowing fan, which separates the chaff from the wheat. It is here I discover the painful symptoms of the world, of the flesh, and of the devil's success in alienating the once *attentive mind* from ministerial instructions; and

drawing it off from holy, persevering, christian practice. No sooner do I perceive a listlessness in their manner, and an irregularity in their attendance here, than experience has taught me where to look for the cause. My observations on improper dress, and on the absolute necessity of shunning vain and ungodly companions at all times, and especially on the Sabbath, are found to displease the wavering part of my young charge; and, on inquiry, I always find they are actually falling into the very evils which I have warned and entreated them to escape. For a time there seems to be a struggle between the convictions of conscience, and the devices and desires of the flesh. And it may be some weeks or months before they can quite shake off their respect for their minister, and their fear of God; but in many, very many cases, the work is completely done in half a year's time; so that they can absent themselves altogether from our school, dress in a tawdry manner, and flirt about the village on a Sunday evening with young men, who, to say the least of them, have no fear of God before their eyes, and whose persuasions lead these unhappy persons first to turn their backs on God, in absenting themselves from our evening parties, and then gradually to overcome all their convictions of sin, their sense of danger, and their desire of an interest in Christ Jesus and his great salvation. In some instances, I have had cause to fear that the Holy Spirit has been quite taken from them; for while they have acted so as to bring a scandal even on the female sex, they have lived apparently unmindful

of what either God or man thought of their conduct. But one thing is worthy of remark : that as far as my own observations have gone, with only one exception, every individual who has thus turned away from God has incurred, either disgrace of character, or lasting misery and distress. Those who have, as it were, courted seduction, have been seduced and become quite hardened. Others, who were kept from such depths of evil, but who would associate and intermarry with irreligious characters, have given a death-blow to all their comforts on earth. Their partners have uniformly turned out unkind, nay *cruel husbands*; and while in several instances I hope the Lord has not quite forgotten to be gracious to the unhappy womens' souls, he has, undoubtedly, made their sins and backslidings their severest chastisement. Poor unhappy women! Now it is too late to remedy the evil, they but too severely feel the many and great sorrows that an irreligious husband brings into the house of one who once sought the Lord, and who, it may be, again wishes to return, like the prodigal son, to his father's house, but is opposed and hindered in a thousand ways by her profane husband. Often do these men forbid their wives to attend the means of grace, and, as far as in them lies, they exclude both minister and serious neighbours from their houses. And is this the object, the idol for whose sake any once promising and naturally amiable girl has turned her back on God? Yes, this is the individual who was to make her completely *happy*. Follow this man, and you will see him

through one part of the day spending his money in the alehouse; and during the other, cursing and swearing, and reeling in drunkenness about his own, half-starving his children for want of that money which he has squandered in his brutal excesses, and abusing and beating her who gave up God and conscience to be his. This is not over-charging the picture. I could take any friend to, alas! but too many cottages, where all I have said is verified every week. No doubt but Satan leads on many to continue such improper acquaintances, and to form such unfit connexions, under the visionary expectation of being instrumental in reforming those habits in their suitors which they cannot but see and condemn in their sober moments. Yes, they argue to themselves, they shall have so much influence, and the individual makes such promises, and perhaps has already reformed in part, that they doubt not but time and good management will complete all that remains to be done. This is the way they answer any objections of their friends, and silence any occasional fears that arise in their own minds. But I should wish to know, whether *any one instance* of such reformation has, under such circumstances, ever taken place? Certainly not within my observation and inquiries. Nor can it be expected. She who knows her Lord's will, and deliberately breaks his commands, can never expect his blessing as the result of such transgression. All that can be hoped for is, that her offended Lord will yet spare her soul, and bring it forward through that scene of earthly wretchedness which

her improper conduct has entailed on herself. This certainly is, in many instances, found to be the case. But who, even in this case, would not shudder at the prospect of such a train of bitter afflictions becoming their inheritance for life, and arising too from that very quarter where they had calculated on reaping so much happiness?

The case that formed an exception must not be passed over in silence ; for although that individual did not tarnish her character with the world, nor encounter domestic wretchedness, yet her soul was, and I believe still is, in the utmost peril of being lost. Miss L. had, up to the time of becoming acquainted with Mr. S., maintained so much of the steady Christian character, as to encounter much harshness from her father. She, however, would not join their routs, or any of the gay parties that surrounded her. She dressed as became a disciple of Christ, and went about doing good, and associated with the wise and good only. She bore reproach for Christ's sake as became one of his followers, and was the joy and rejoicing of my brother clergyman, B. Mr. S. her suitor was a very gentlemanly, rich man, without one spark of religion. The family of Miss L. considered it a very advantageous offer, and after a while she gave him her hand, with, I believe, no small portion of her heart. Conscious, however, that those who have no religion of their own are not very partial to it in those connected with them, she had, previous to her marriage, insisted on separate articles, legally *drawn up and executed*, declarative that she

was never to be opposed or hindered in attending whatever means of grace she wished to be present at. Mr. S. was very much of a Gallio; he honestly signed the deed, and I believe never attempted to infringe on its provisions: nor, indeed, was there any occasion for him to do so; for, melancholy to state, within a short time after their union, his once serious bride, finding herself in possession of a splendid establishment, and surrounded with the gay friends of her gay and rich husband, drank so rapidly into the spirit and folly of the world, as to whirl round in the same vortex without the smallest reluctance. She even spent some hours every day with a music-master, learning to play the harp and sing fashionable airs and theatrical pieces. Of course, all her old acquaintance were given up, as her pious habits were relinquished for those of the world. Such was the state of things when I last heard of her family. How her course will finally terminate, the Lord only can tell.

Let this suffice to show how much cause the minister, who loves his flock, and wishes to spend and be spent in their service, has to fear this perilous trial, which one day or other will fall in the way of all his young people. Their inexperience, and the native depravity of the heart, expose them to a host of adversaries; while, alas!

“Vice points them to a flowery vale,
Where streams of pleasure seem to roll;
And every sweet, on every gale,
Crowds through the senses to the soul.”

"Imagination lends her aid
To strengthen ev'ry dangerous snare ;
Till each fond flattering vision's fled,
And gives its victim to despair."

Blessed be God, there are some instances in which both the writer and his brethren in the ministry have succeeded in putting their young hearers on their guard ; and in others they have been permitted to see the deluded individuals break through the snares that had, for a while, entangled and led them astray ; and once more these wandering lambs have been found in the fold humbled, instructed, and more established than ever. Among this number, I believe, the writer of the following letter, which reached me very recently, may safely be included. May the Lord have all the glory !

"REV. SIR,

"You will, no doubt, be very much surprised at receiving a letter from me ; though, I trust, I have not been altogether forgotten in your prayers. I should not have taken the present liberty of writing, did I not know that to hear of the spiritual welfare of any individual would give you great pleasure, and particularly of one who some years ago you so kindly instructed. It is now, I believe, eight or nine years since you exhorted me to guard against forming a connection with any one whom I had not the strongest reason to believe was decidedly religious. So little did I then know of the deceitfulness of my own heart, or of the wiles of our great enemy,

that I thought the caution unnecessary. I felt so decidedly fixed in my own mind, that I forgot the weakness of human resolution, and the many temptations that daily beset our path. My dear and reverend friend, shall I tell you, that this very temptation had well nigh been the ruin of my immortal soul! I blush to say, that I became attached to one who feared not God, who loved not the Lord Jesus Christ; and, as the consequence of such an attachment, I forgot that love to the Saviour which once warmed my heart. Often, while indulging these sinful desires, would my heart smite me with the wickedness of my conduct in backsliding from my God; but I tried to stifle the uneasy thought. I was not willing to pluck out the right eye, and to cut off the right hand. Yes, I had wandered so far in heart, that I did not even like to meet with any of God's people. I well remember, I was afraid of hearing of your coming to —; I thought I could not look you in the face. I forgot that my most secret thoughts were all open before a holy God. But, I bless God, I was not permitted to fall into any outward flagrant sins. Mercies and judgments passed before me, and even severe bodily afflictions hung over me; but I did not return unto the Lord till about five months ago, when it pleased God to call unto himself a near neighbour, a person about my own age; and, O my reverend friend, I wish I could display to you what passed in my mind on hearing and seeing what occurred at that death-bed scene! I trust I shall never forget it. She died rejoicing in the Lord—in

Jesus Christ, as her Saviour ! Often have I read of such deaths, but never was I so near a witness before. Her prayers to be made pure and holy, as God is pure and holy—her anxiety to have no rival in her affections—her earnest desire that she might but go to her Saviour, and her firm dependence upon that Saviour—these things, by the blessing of God, brought to my mind my former hopes and fears respecting that dear Redeemer ; and created in my mind most earnest desires, that I, who had so often offended my God, might be again permitted to renew my broken promises, and by the strength of the blessed Spirit, be enabled to walk in newness of life. I hope and trust these desires are not delusive ; I hope they are the work of the same Spirit of God. I have been enabled altogether to give up the acquaintance that led my heart astray. I feel such earnest desires to be conformed in all things to the will of God—such constant fear lest I should fall again—such earnest prayer to be kept daily and hourly in the narrow path of religion, as, I think, I never did before. Do not these things, my reverend friend, show the finger of God ? Are they not the work of the Spirit ?

“ I have taken the liberty of addressing you, to beg your prayers at a throne of grace, that I may *persevere even unto the end* ; and also particularly to request, that you will speak a word of warning to other young females, &c. &c.”

May the Lord keep and preserve this young woman in her present frame of mind ; and may

many others of her sex be led, through grace, to seek that power and wisdom from above which may preserve them in the circumspect walk of pure and undefiled religion, unspotted by the world, and at a distance from all that friendship which is enmity against God! May they ever remember, that there can be no union of heart, and consequently no happiness, between a man who fears not God, and a woman who walks in his fear all the day long. "I speak as unto my children. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 13—18.

No. X.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.--Ps. xxx. 5.

IN many departments and operations of the natural world, we behold a striking analogy to the state and operations of the work of grace on the heart of man. On a gloomy morning in May, tidings came that widow S— was removed to a new residence, and was more than usually indisposed in body, and more than ever distressed in her mind. The day was advancing, but the sky was overcast with a November-like hue. Our vallies were obscured in a sheet of small rain; and the gathering vapour lay on the sides of our lovely hills, and shut out all their diversified beauties from our view. As I rode along, I turned frequently to those parts of the horizon where so many natural objects of delight were wont to present themselves to the traveller, but they were all concealed. The imagination might easily figure to itself a dreary waste of inhospitable and barren rocks; a forlorn and desolate country, where wolves, and tigers, and untamed men, took up their dwelling. It would have been a difficult task to impress on a stranger's mind what a cheering and delightful *piece of scenery* lay around him; what beauties *of nature* would at once break on his eyes the

instant those clouds and mists should pass away ! And this, thought I, is the case with my poor widowed sufferer, whose soul is bowed down beneath the presence of many fears ; whose faith is, at present, too weak to pierce the surrounding gloom. There are given unto *her*, and to all in her situation, many great and precious promises. The Holy Scriptures abound with consolations and encouragements ; and Prophets and Apostles call on her to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world—to contemplate him in all his blessed and gracious attributes as the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely : but alas ! the vail is at present before her eyes ; she walks in darkness and has no light. She seems more than any other of my flock to fear taking any comfort to herself. She groans, and weeps, and prays, and loves to hear of the Redeemer ; but her naturally sorrowful spirit, her deep sense of sin, and the many dismal suggestions of Satan, are as a dark and wintry cloud ; they shut out the cheering beams of the Sun of Righteousness from her soul ; and much she fears that that soul will one day set in the blackness of darkness for ever. Oh ! that this her night of weeping might give place to the promised joyous morning which so many have already experienced to their everlasting comfort.

This poor woman had, in her younger days, paid some attention to the concerns of her soul. But as she advanced in life, she declined in grace ; and when she became a wife and a mother, the cares of this world, and the objects of

her natural affection, became as the thorns on the good seed—all was choked for many days. How common and how melancholy a case is this; and how completely does such conduct prove, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! Were it not so, as an increase of cares and anxieties crowded upon us, we should feel an equally increased desire to cast our burdens and cares on the Lord, and should rejoice that he had promised to care for us. So far, however, is this from being the case, that poor wayward man makes those very trials and circumstances a plea and excuse for neglecting God, which, of all others, should bring him more earnestly to seek and serve him. But to return to the poor widow. It must be remarked, that although she long seemed disposed to forget and forsake God, yet God would neither forget nor forsake her. He visited her backslidings with the rod more than once or twice. A part of her family were removed by the ordinary course of sickness, and some were called hence by very afflictive providences—they were cut off by accidents, as the world terms those calls of the Almighty which come in the form and character of sudden, violent death. In short, her gourd of earth-born happiness withered. The noon-tide sun of affliction fell on its branches, a worm was at its root, and it sunk to the ground. She looked around her dwelling, but there was neither child nor husband to sooth her sorrows or *to share her joys*; they were all gone. She *was left alone, childless, and a widow, and*

poor and friendless in a world which too often frowns on distress altogether, and at best can administer but little comfort to one in her situation. For a considerable while her strength and health had been on the decline; and at the time when her case more particularly called for my attention, she was labouring under much of a consumptive cough and great difficulty of breathing. An internal fever was progressively consuming the whole frame; her days were days of pain, and her nights were those of tossing to and fro. These afflictions were, however, absorbed, and, as far as possible, forgotten in the heavier trials of her soul. She looked backwards on days and years spent in labouring for the meat which perisheth, and had now to bewail how much she had undervalued and neglected to procure that living bread which comes down from heaven. She looked forward to a dying hour and a judgment near at hand; and could only contemplate a God whom she had slighted, a kingdom which she had almost forgotten, and a society which, if she had not despised, she certainly had not hungered and thirsted after. Her case much interested me. She was naturally placid, gentle, and timid. Like Hannah of old, a woman of a sorrowful, tender spirit, not fretful and peevish, but depressed, and ready, like a bruised reed, to break down under every rude blast which assails it. In addition to all this, the Lord had now given her a very tender conscience; and Satan, ~~as~~ ^{as} has been already hinted, harassed her with continual accusations of her past sins and present imperfec-

tions, and by every means endeavoured to perplex her understanding, darken her soul, and destroy her little faith. Now, although this self-abasement, this sense of sin, and humiliation of soul before God, are sure signs of genuine repentance, especially when coupled, as was the widow's case, with an earnest desire to give up the whole soul to Christ, and to love and obey him with all the heart, and all the mind, and all the strength ; yet so long as the individual continues to walk in darkness and distress, the pastor cannot but deeply sympathise with the sufferer, whose want of faith, and of clearer views of the freeness and fulness of the salvation of the Gospel, cause them to go mourning all the day. Nay, his own heart will sometimes sink, and he will be ready to fear lest, in the hour of trial, he also may feel nothing but the waves and billows going over his soul. But to return again to the poor widow : it will be gratifying and encouraging to the Christian reader to learn, that He who for wise and gracious purposes does sometimes hide himself from his mourning and praying children for a season, that with everlasting mercies he may gather them at the fittest season and most precious manner, even He was pleased to look on this his afflicted and distressed handmaid. Light, and peace, and trust, and faith, gradually took place of darkness, disorder, doubts, and despair. She lived several weeks longer than any of us expected ; and though confined to her bed, and every day *conscious* of the near approach of death, her soul *was no longer* terrified. She lay calmly resigned

as to every earthly event, and humbly but steadily looking forward to the hour of her death, as that happy period which should introduce her soul into everlasting life. Weak, and almost breathless as she was, there were times when she could not refrain from the attempt to sing,

“ Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear ;
By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform ;
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”

Her deep sense of personal unworthiness never forsook her, but her former distressing fears were gone for ever. A calm composure now marked her countenance with an unusually interesting cast, while a scriptural peace rested in her heart. She could now hear portions of God's word read, and believe that she had an interest in them. It was comfortable to visit her, and edifying to converse with her. To myself it was more than comfortable: for as her former dark and distressed state had often greatly depressed my own spirits, in this her victory over those fears which once so powerfully assailed her, the Lord in effect said again to me, “ Why art thou so fearful, O thou of little faith ?”

On Sunday afternoon, I was informed that the widow's most threatening symptoms had much increased. As it was not possible to see her that evening, I hastened, as early the next morning as my other calls of duty would admit, towards her distant cottage, and had approached within a quarter of a mile of it, when I met a poor

woman on her way to inform me, that the widow was no longer an inhabitant of this world of pain and trial.

"Neighbour S— is gone, Sir; she went off about half an hour ago. She died quite happy, Sir; but do pray ride on to the house. Widow D. is there, and I'm sure they will be glad to see you. They did so wish you had been there."

I stayed not to converse any further, but rode on to the place which had been the scene of so many conversations with one who was to converse with me no more on earth.

"Bless me, here is Mr. M.!" exclaimed widow D. as I approached the door. I had scarcely entered and shut it to after me, before the widow and two other women burst into tears. "Poor dear Betty is gone at last; and so happy!" "O, Sir I wish you had been here," said the former.

"I wish so too; but I trust all is well; and as I could not witness her last moments, tell me a little about them."

"Well, Sir," answered D., "I had been reading for some time, and talking to her in my poor way, not thinking her end was so near."

"And was she quite sensible?"

"O yes, Sir, and she did so seem to enjoy it, her whole soul seemed taken up with it! All at once I saw her change for death; and I said, Betty, you are going, you are going! Now, how is it with your soul? Do you find the Lord present and precious? But she could not answer, Sir; her speech was gone, she only

looked at me. I said again, Betty, now you are going; if your soul is happy, if Christ Jesus is present and precious to you, and you cannot speak, do hold up your hand in token of your assurance. And, Sir, as soon as ever I had said so, poor dear soul! she held up both her hands, and looked so happy, and then she died."

This was every thing the pastor could desire, and it was far more than the poor woman once dared to hope for. The back door was open; I went out into the meadow for a few minutes, for I felt it best to be silent and alone. When I had a little collected myself, I re-entered the cottage. We ascended the old stair-case, and for the last time I gazed on the countenance of my once sorrowful neighbour, and blessed God that she was then beholding the face of Him who loved her and gave himself for her, and who had now redeemed her soul, and glorified it with a mansion in his Father's kingdom. On descending, I met the poor, old, worldly-minded master of the house where the departed widow was a lodger. Often had I talked to him, but in vain; he seemed affected, when I reminded him of the short period he had to live, and of the blessedness of dying "in the Lord." May Omnipotent Grace subdue his aged and callous heart, and fit both him and his partner to follow Betty S. from their humble dwelling on earth to a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! And may the experience of this woman more deeply establish in our hearts the consoling declaration, that, "though weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning."

Yes ; and even if it should please our heavenly Father to lead us through a dark and gloomy day, we have another blessed promise : " Behold it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." This passage recurred with some force to my mind as I was returning homeward from the widow's cottage ; and though in its primary application it refers to far greater events than the happy deaths of individual believers, yet feeling that it might be fairly accommodated to such a case, I endeavoured to improve it on the Sunday after the poor widow's interment, by bringing forward one or two other instances wherein the gracious dealings of the Almighty had passed before our eyes. In my next, a sketch of what was then advanced, in addition to the widow's case, shall follow this statement.

END OF VOL. I.

*Donnott, Printer,
Leather Lane, Holborn.*



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